

**Univerzita Karlova**  
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**DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE**

**Pronunciation instruction in the context of TEFL**  
**Výuka výslovnosti angličtiny jako cizího jazyka**

Praha 2019

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## Abstract

Pronunciation instruction in the TEFL classroom has long been a neglected area regardless of its importance for the students. The data in the literature shows that teachers are generally not ready to provide pronunciation instruction for a variety of reasons: lack of qualification and training, theoretical and practical knowledge, time and motivation. The present thesis explores the current situation of pronunciation instruction at a private language school in the Czech Republic using of classroom observations and teacher and student surveys. The results confirm the initial hypothesis that pronunciation instruction including pronunciation error correction is nearly non-existent or occurs sporadically in the classroom. Only one out of four teachers (T1) included explicit pronunciation information into his teaching. The only pronunciation error correction technique observed with the four teachers was a recast which proved to be ineffective in most cases. Even though the teachers and students are generally aware of the importance of pronunciation in foreign language acquisition, their individual beliefs and attitudes towards pronunciation learning and teaching greatly differ.

**Key words:** pronunciation, TEFL, explicit instruction, segmental features, suprasegmental features, teacher and student cognition

## Abstrakt:

Výuka výslovnosti v rámci výuky angličtiny jako cizího jazyka představuje zanedbanou oblast, navzdory její důležitosti pro studenty. Data v literatuře nám ukazují, že učitelé nejsou připraveni vyučovat výslovnost hned z několika důvodů: nedostačující kvalifikace a školení, nedostatek teoretických a praktických znalostí, času a motivace. Tato diplomová práce zkoumá současnou situaci ve výuce výslovnosti na soukromé jazykové škole v České republice za použití observací a učitelských a studentských dotazníků. Výsledky práce potvrzují původní hypotézu, která říká, že výuka výslovnosti včetně oprav výslovnostních chyb takřka neexistuje, případně se v hodinách objevuje pouze sporadicky. Pouze jeden ze čtyř učitelů (T1) zahrnul do výuky explicitní informace o výslovnosti. Jediný způsob, jakým byly opravovány výslovnostní chyby byl takzvaný *recast* neboli zopakování slova či fráze se správnou výslovností, který se však ukázal být ve většině případů neefektivním. I přesto, že si je většina učitelů a studentů vědoma důležitosti výslovnosti při akvizici cizího jazyka, jejich přesvědčení a názory se velmi liší.

**Klíčová slova:** výslovnost, výuka angličtiny jako cizího jazyka, explicitní výuka, segmentální jevy, suprasegmentální jevy, názory učitelů a studentů

## **List of abbreviations**

AOL	Age of learning
C	Consonant
CALL	Computer-assisted language learning
EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
FCE	First Certificate of English
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
L1	First language
L2	Second/foreign language
LOR	Length of residence
NAE	North American English
NESs	Native English speakers
NESTs	Native English speaking teachers
NNESs	Nonnative English speakers
NNSs	Nonnative speakers
NNESTs	Nonnative English speaking teachers
NSs	Native speakers
SLTC	Second language teacher cognition
SLTE	Second language teacher education
S1-S13	Student 1-13
T1-T4	Teacher 1-4
TEFL	Teaching English as a foreign language
TESL	Teaching English as a second language
TL	Target language
V	Vowel

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# **1 Introduction**

Although the field of pronunciation instruction in second language (L2) acquisition has been around for several centuries, the implications the research has brought are often neglected in the classroom. Pronunciation instruction, as opposed to the skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, appears to remain in the background of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). The aim of this thesis is to, therefore, discover current approaches to pronunciation instruction of TEFL teachers and explain the reasons behind its neglect.

The theoretical part of the thesis serves as an introduction into pronunciation instruction. At the beginning, it provides basic terminology related to pronunciation. Following is a discussion of the importance of pronunciation, effects of pronunciation instruction and current approaches. Furthermore, it focuses on the struggles of pronunciation instruction faced by the teacher, definition of a good pronunciation teacher and common beliefs of L2 teachers and students related to pronunciation. The empirical part of the thesis is divided into two parts. The first part is concerned with an observation of four TEFL teachers at Swallow School of English in Liberec. In total, sixteen 90-minute English as a foreign language (EFL) lessons are analyzed in terms of pronunciation instruction and pronunciation error correction. Studies suggest that little or no pronunciation instruction can be generally expected in an EFL class. Although the situation may have improved to some extent, the thesis must anticipate this possibility as well. In the case of insufficiency of pronunciation instruction material the thesis will therefore also be concerned with missed opportunities in pronunciation instruction and will suggest possible strategies in its integration. Furthermore, we are fully aware of the relative shortness of the observation period which is aimed to be compensated for with teacher and student surveys regarding pronunciation teaching and learning respectively. The survey results will help us obtain essential data from both the teachers and their students which were unable to be obtained through mere observation.



## 2 Theoretical background

### 2.1 What is pronunciation?

Before we proceed to pronunciation instruction, it is necessary to define what pronunciation actually is. The term pronunciation refers to “all those aspects of speech, which make for an easily intelligible flow of speech, including segmental articulation, rhythm, intonation and phrasing, and more peripherally even gesture, body language and eye contact” (Fraser 2001, cited in Grant 2014, 14). The definition comprises segmental, suprasegmental and peripheral features of pronunciation. By segmental features, we mean the way the individual sounds are pronounced. Suprasegmental features, also called prosody, stretch beyond the level of individual sounds and cover stress, rhythm, intonation and phrasing. Finally, peripheral features are non-verbal aspects of pronunciation (Grant 2014, 14-15). Grant broadens Fraser’s definition by adding the category of global features such as volume, rate of speech and articulatory setting which also affect the way one speaks (Grant 2014, 14-15). These types of features will be introduced in the following subsections.

#### 2.1.1 Segmental features

Segmental features correspond to the pronunciation of vowels and consonants. Consonant sounds are classified in terms of place of articulation, manner of articulation and voicing (whether the consonant is voiced or voiceless). Similarly, vowel sounds differ in lip position (whether the lips are rounded or not), tongue height and tongue position. The following charts provide classification of North American English (NAE) phonemes (Yoshida, online).

Classification of NAE Consonant Phonemes		
Manner of Articulation (Place of Articulation)	Voiceless	Voiced
<b>Stops (Bilabial / Alveolar / Velar)</b>	/p/ /t/ /k/	/b/ /d/ /g/
<b>Fricatives (Labiodental / Dental / Alveolar / Palatal / Glottal)</b>	/f/ /θ/ /s/ /ʃ/ /h/	/v/ /ð/ /z/ /ʒ/
<b>Affricates (Palatal)</b>	/tʃ/	/dʒ/
<b>Nasals Bilabial / Alveolar / Velar)</b>		/m/ /n/ /ŋ/
<b>Liquids (Alveolar / Palatal)</b>		/l/ /r/
<b>Glides (Bilabial / Palatal)</b>		/w/ /y/

Figure 2.1: Classification of NAE consonant phonemes

	Front	Central	Back
High	iy ɪ		uW ʊ
Mid	ey ɛ	ʌ, ə	ow
Low	æ	ɑ	ɔ

Figure 2.2: Classification of NAE vowel phonemes

Apart from the vowel sounds presented in the chart above, there are also three diphthongs. A diphthong is a combination of two adjacent vowels within the same syllable.

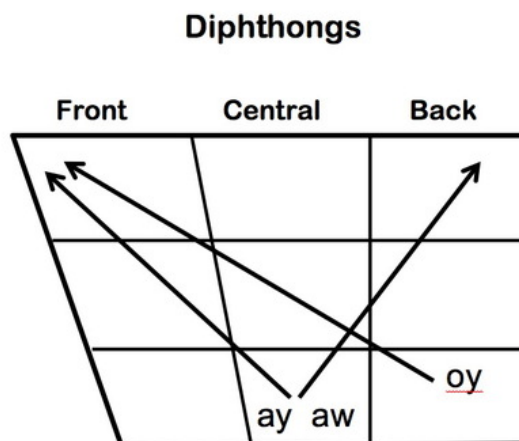


Figure 2.3: Classification of NAE diphthong phonemes

The charts provide a nice overview of individual sounds in isolation, nevertheless, it is necessary to point out that these sounds are not “static, stand-alone bits that we string together into words” (Grant 2014, 23). This is due to the fact that sounds in speech “spill into neighboring sounds” and they change based on preceding or following sounds, position in a word and even the importance and role of the word it belongs to (Grant 2014, 23-25). This phenomenon will be further discussed in section 2.1.2.

Pronunciation errors on the consonant and vowel level include substitution (replacing one sound with another), omission (deleting sounds), addition (inserting other sounds) and

alteration (changing sounds). Sounds undergoing various processes such as aspiration or assimilation also cause difficulties both on perception and production level (Grant 2014, 24-25). Overall, teachers are relatively familiar with at least some segmental pronunciation instruction and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is often applied in the classroom. What teachers might not, however, be aware of is that not all pronunciation error occurring at the segmental level are of the same importance. In order to decide which segmental features are essential for students the functional load chart might be employed (discussed in section 2.2.7.2) (Grant 2014, 19-20).

### **2.1.2            Suprasegmental features**

Suprasegmental features are less commonly taught aspects of pronunciation (Thomson, Derwing 2014, 1) such as word stress, rhythm, thought groups and pausing, intonation and connected speech. Word stress is relevant in polysyllabic words; stressed syllables are louder, higher in pitch, longer and clearer while unstressed syllables are shorter and contain reduced vowels. It is the word stress that might help listeners identify words and their boundaries; therefore, missing or incorrect word stress might cause serious misunderstandings. Rhythm refers to the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables and words. Lexical words such as nouns or verbs carry more stress than grammatical words such as prepositions or articles which are as a result weakened or reduced. Thought groups are grammatical and semantic chunks of utterances which go together and help listeners navigate in the stream of speech. Each thought group contains a word which receives the most prominence. Such words are again louder, longer and clearer. Each thought group also has its own intonation contour. By intonation, we mean the rise and fall in the pitch of the voice. The pitch changes on the focus word or its stressed syllable and is followed by a rise or fall depending on the intention of the speaker. The last significant element of the English language is connected speech. Words within one thought group are linked together and word boundaries as we know them from orthography disappear (Grant 2014, 16-18).

### **2.1.3            Global features**

Speech rate is a well-known global factor affecting the understanding of one's speech. Typically, we imagine examples in which speakers speak too fast to be followed by the listener. Speech that is too slow, however, also imposes problems on the listener. This

becomes a problem with nonnative speakers (NNSs) who logically tend to speak more slowly than native speakers (NSs). As a result the understanding might be compromised (Munro, Derwing 2001, cited in Grant 2014, 15). Another global feature is articulatory setting which refers to the voice quality originating from different positions of articulatory organs such as the mouth, tongue or lips. Since the articulatory setting is different for each language, it can affect individual sounds of L2 speech (Grant 2014, 15).

#### **2.1.4 Peripheral features**

Peripheral or paralinguistic features are non-verbal aspects of pronunciation such as gestures, body language and eye contact accompanying the speech. Even though they are the broadest components of pronunciation, they are generally related to stress, rhythm and intonation. Speakers for instance create more emphasis on an important word or phrase by nodding their head or using a particular gesture (Grant 2014, 15).

#### **2.1.5 Perceptual dimensions of pronunciation**

The “manner or style of pronunciation that identifies the country, region or background a person is from” (Grant 2014, 9) refers to the accent. It is necessary to point out that each individual has an accent despite the fact that many native speakers imagine their speech to be accent-free (Grant 2014, 9). A foreign accent is then described as the extent to which an L2 speech differs from a standard variety of English (Derwing, Munro 2005, 379-397). Depending on the strength of such accent, we may describe the L2 as heavily accented in the case of a strong foreign accent or native-like when the speech closely resembles such of a native speaker.

Although having a foreign accent in L2 speech is easily perceived by native speakers, it does not mean that such speech must necessarily be difficult to understand or even lead to a communication breakdown. It is only natural for L2 speakers to have accented speech, and listeners are often able to “understand it even when it is noticeably foreign” (Derwing, Munro 2014a, 221). The danger of foreign accent lies, rather than in the successful transmission of the message, in the perception of the listener. Speakers whose speech is perceived as foreign or heavily accented might be ignored, stereotyped or discriminated against. This is even more unfortunate as the number of native speakers of English

(NNESSs) has by far surpassed the number of native speakers of English (NESSs) in the world (Grant 2014, 9). On the other hand, if the accent is perceived as sophisticated, the speaker might be treated with respect and admiration (Derwing, Munro 2014a, 221). Achieving a native-like accent is, however, an unrealistic goal for many L2 speakers (Flege, Munro and MacKay 1995 cited in Derwing, Munro 2005, 384). Therefore, what should be of greater importance rather than the presence or absence of foreign accent and its strength is how intelligible and comprehensible the L2 speech is.

Intelligibility corresponds to the extent to which speech is understood. When the speaker is intelligible the listener is able to fully understand the meaning of the speech. In the case of low intelligibility, the message might be either misinterpreted or not understood in any way. The term comprehensibility refers to the amount of effort the listener has to put into understanding the speaker. Low comprehensibility is, however, by no means restricted to L2 speakers, in fact, it is relatively common to struggle to understand NSs due to their mumbling, inappropriate volume or a speech disorder (Derwing, Munro 2015, 1-3). In L2 speech, the factors that affect intelligibility and comprehensibility are “segments, prosody and voice quality areas that differ from what listeners are accustomed to hearing” (Derwing, Munro 2015, 3).

As we have already mentioned, the presence of foreign accent does not mean the speech must also be low in intelligibility and comprehensibility. In reality, the relationship between accentedness, intelligibility and comprehensibility is quite complex. In 1995, Munro and Derwing created a study in which native speakers of English rated English utterances produced by ten native Mandarin speakers and two native English speakers in terms of accentedness, intelligibility and comprehensibility on a 9-point scale (Derwing, Munro 1995, 73). The utterances were also transcribed and number of phonetic, phonemic, grammatical and intonational errors were counted.

As expected, the native English samples were judged as most native-like. To rate the strength of accent for native Mandarin speakers, the entire scale was used with most samples lying evenly between categories two and eight and only 4% of samples were rated as native-like. The intelligibility and comprehensibility rating proved to be less

straightforward. Although most native English samples were found to be the most comprehensible, one out of six native samples was rated less comprehensible than eleven native samples (Derwing, Munro 1995, 81-82). More than 50% of native samples received the highest intelligibility scores and also tended to be rated highly for comprehensibility even in the case of those samples which also fell into the category of having the strongest foreign accent (Derwing, Munro 1995, 89-90). Furthermore, the study argues that “most listeners showed significant correlation between accentedness and errors, fewer showed correlations between accentedness and perceived comprehensibility, and fewer still showed a relationship between accentedness and intelligibility” (Derwing, Munro 1995, 74).

The results of the study suggest that L2 speech should not be judged on scales from heavily accented and difficult to understand to native-like and easily comprehended. Instead, three separate scales rating accentedness, intelligibility and comprehensibility must be applied to assess L2 speakers’ pronunciation (Munro, Derwing 1995, 93). Even though reduction of foreign accent might also be of importance for some L2 students, it is intelligibility and comprehensibility that are crucial for the learner who, above all, needs to be understood with ease. The differences between the three terms play an important role when making instructional choices in the pronunciation teaching, therefore, teachers should be aware of them (Derwing, Munro 2015, 5). The focus on either accent reduction comfortable intelligibility and comprehensibility in TEFL context is further discussed in section 2.2 which introduces the two basic principles related to pronunciation instruction.

#### **2.1.6 Role of the listener**

Communication is a reciprocal process that involves not only the speaker but also the listener. In fact, the only way to measure one’s intelligibility is to present the speech to the listeners and have them respond to the text (Derwing, Munro 2015, 7). Although acoustic measures of speech do exist and could be seen as a more objective and useful method in some situations, they are unable to replace the human listeners who “take into account context at multiple levels” and “their perceptions may accommodate deviations from an expected target” which are perhaps irrelevant to intelligibility (Derwing, Munro 2015, 8-9).

When people do not understand one another, it is typically the speaker who is found responsible. What is often forgotten unfortunately, are the skills, familiarity of the topic and attitudes of the listener who is just as important a participant of the process (Grant 2014, 11). Perhaps the most problematic of these aspects are the attitudes of the listener towards the speaker who is often discriminated based on their looks or accent, irrespective of their actual intelligibility or comprehensibility. A study by Rubin proves that listener bias exists and is not unique to lower, uneducated classes as one might expect but appears in university circles as well. In his experiment, 62 undergraduate U.S. students were presented to the same recorded lecture whose understanding was then tested in a comprehension test. Half of the students were led to believe that the lecturer was a Caucasian female, the other half that she was of Asian origin. While the former group received a score of 12.5 / 14 the latter dropped to 7.31 / 14 simply due to the lecturer's exotic looks (Rubin 1992, cited in Grant 14, 11). It is therefore important that L2 learners are aware of the bias they might face based on aspects that are often beyond their control. As for teachers, they can help them minimize those accents which are seen as inferior by the society or at least inform them about the problematic areas in their speech and the possible consequences.

## **2.2 Pronunciation instruction**

The discussion of pronunciation instruction must begin with two basic principles employed; the Nateness Principle and the Intelligibility Principle which strongly influence the content of pronunciation instruction. The Nateness Principle refers to the belief that L2 speech should be ultimately "indistinguishable from that of a native speaker" while the Intelligibility Principle emphasizes high intelligibility which is not directly correlated to whether the speech sounds native or not (Derwing, Munro 2015, 6). Nowadays, it is the latter one which is preferred since the majority of L2 speakers need only comfortable intelligibility (Abercrombie 1949, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 6) and achieving native-like pronunciation is often beyond their capacity (Flege, Munro and MacKay 1995, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 6).

In order to help their students master their pronunciation, teachers must understand that pronunciation instruction and learning is a multi-level gradual process combining several

different skills. Grant differentiates between 4 such levels; motor, perceptual, cognitive and psycho-social. The motor or physical level refers to the articulatory system which is used to the L1 settings. L2 speakers therefore require straightforward descriptions of new productions and a significant amount of practice to learn the L2 sounds. The perceptual level corresponds to perceptual trainings during which students must train their ears to recognize new sounds and distinctions respective for the L2. This ability was unfortunately lost around the age of ten to twelve months due to its ineffectiveness for the mother tongue. On the cognitive level, students must reorganize and add new categories to their sound system which will function as a repertoire for the L2. Last but not least important is the psycho-social level focusing on the motivations of adult speakers towards pronunciation changes. The motives might be of personal, professional, social or cultural character. Without them, students will only scarcely make any progress regarding pronunciation (Grant 2014, 28-29).

### **2.2.1 Effectiveness of pronunciation instruction**

*But is pronunciation instruction actually necessary? Cannot students acquire new pronunciation patterns simply by being exposed to the target language and copying the behavior of native speakers?* Such questions were asked by many researchers in the past decades and their studies show that pronunciation instruction does make a difference in learners' improvement.

Couper believes that many students are not aware of their pronunciation problems which must be explicitly pointed out to them. Their ears are trained for their L1, therefore, they cannot perceive the differences between individual sounds that are naturally acquired by NSs. Learning to hear them requires a lot of practice and comparison of their audio recordings with those of NSs. It is also necessary for students to be comfortable with the metalanguage used to describe pronunciation patterns and to be given plenty of opportunities to practice and receive constructive feedback (Couper 2006, 51-52).

Couper created an experiment in which segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation instruction was added to the syllabus for 15 post-intermediate students (Couper 2003, 53). All participants were residents of New Zealand with the average stay of two and a half



years and with various language backgrounds. The pronunciation syllabus focused on the recognition of the importance of pronunciation, self-evaluation and self-monitoring, and perception and production of both segmental and suprasegmental features (Couper 2003, 56-57). The pre and post tests including both reading and spontaneous speaking tasks showed increased awareness of pronunciation and a lower number of errors in segmental and suprasegmental features (Couper 2003, 61-62). The results of the administered survey supported the belief that the participants generally appreciated explicit pronunciation instruction. One out of fifteen participants, whose pronunciation was rated as the best, showed preference for natural acquiring of pronunciation rather than explanations, another student did not believe pronunciation was important, yet, his results improved over the course of the experiment (Couper 2003, 66).

Derwing, Munro and Wiebe conducted an experiment in which native speakers of English compared the speech of three groups of ESL learners. The first group received only segmental instruction, the second group received instruction on general speaking habits and prosody, and the last group received no explicit pronunciation instruction over the course of twelve weeks. The randomly ordered sentences uttered by the three groups of students at the beginning and end of the experiment were rated for accentedness and comprehensibility by 48 NS. Narratives were also evaluated in terms of accent, comprehensibility and fluency by six experienced ESL teachers (Derwing, Munro and Wiebe 1998, 393-394).

The results of the experiment in read sentences showed that both groups explicitly instructed in pronunciation significantly improved in terms of comprehensibility as opposed to the control group which received no pronunciation instruction. All groups also made progress regarding their accentedness with the segmental group achieving the best results (Derwing, Munro and Wiebe 1998, 402-403). The only group that showed improved comprehensibility and fluency in spontaneous speech was the second group instructed in general speaking habits. None of the groups improved their accentedness in narratives. Therefore, it seems that it is the suprasegmental instruction that enables the students to use their newly achieved skills in more spontaneous contexts. In conclusion, the authors argue

that teaching both segmentals and suprasegmentals is beneficial for students (Derwing, Munro and Wiebe 1998, 406-407).

The previously mentioned research proves that pronunciation instruction does positively affect L2 students, however, all of the studies focused solely on short-term effects which were tested immediately after the course. In order to discover whether the positive effects of pronunciation remain in the long term, Couper tested the subjects of his experiment three times; at the beginning of the two-week pronunciation course, immediately after the course and twelve weeks later. The participants were adult immigrants to New Zealand attending a year-long English course. The pronunciation course was preceded by a diagnostic test which showed the most problematic areas were the nasals, voiceless fricatives, the voiced alveolar stop, the voiced dental fricative, sentence stress and rhythm (Couper 2006, 49-50).

In the speaking test, all students showed a significant improvement in the percentage of errors between the first and second testing. The third testing showed a slight increase in the error percentage, however, this number was still much lower than the one in the first testing (Couper 2006, 55). Couper also measured the correlation between the percentage of errors and intelligibility and concluded that the error rate of approximately 10% did not affect the speaker's intelligibility while those speakers with the error rate above 20% were already difficult to understand (Couper 2006, 60).

### **2.2.2 Pronunciation instruction of segmental versus suprasegmental features**

Although pronunciation instruction has been studied for several centuries now, it is still considered to be the least employed area in second language teaching (Derwing 2010, 24). When pronunciation instruction is, however, incorporated into the syllabus, it often focuses solely on segmental features since "English language teachers tend to be more familiar with the aspects of pronunciation that are based squarely in the segmental realm" (Grant 2014, 20). This is probably for their partial correspondence to orthography, relative simplicity or the narrow focus of pronunciation teacher trainings and textbooks. The suprasegmental instruction is more complex and often requires the use of context, therefore teachers might hesitate with its incorporation into their classes.

Derwing and Munro discovered that most software employed in Canadian ESL classes centered only around segmental features (Derwing, Munro 2005, 391). This is rather unfortunate as suprasegmentals play a significant role in intelligibility (Derwing, Munro 2005, 386) and suprasegmental errors cause graver misunderstandings than segmentals (Derwing 2003, Celce-Murcia et al. 2010). In her study, Hahn analyzed the role of nuclear stresses which were altered. She discovered that the participants understood significantly more when the nuclear stress was correctly assigned as opposed to instances when the nuclear stress was incorrectly placed or completely missing (Hahn 2004, 201). It is therefore vital that teachers are aware of such consequences of some aspects of prosody and communicate such knowledge to their students.

In addition to this, the teaching of suprasegmentals is also more appropriate in classes where students of various language backgrounds study together since their needs for segmental instruction are likely to differ (Derwing 2003, 562). On the other hand, some researchers claim that the role assigned to prosody might be at times exaggerated. Levis, for instance, claims that “native listeners distinguished meanings in only three of five intonation contours (Levis 2002, cited in Derwing, Munro 2005, 385).

Although suprasegmental features might lead to more serious communication breakdowns than segmentals, both aspects of pronunciation should be incorporated into teaching as they are, in fact, “woven into a single system” (Dickerson 2010, cited in Grant 2014, 27). To illustrate their relationship, Grant points out the different pronunciation of the verb *leave* in *I’m trying to study. Leave me alone!* and *I still love you! Don’t leave me!* Since the former *leave* is not prominent, it might likely undergo the assimilation process and be pronounced as *leamme alone* while the latter receives the most prominence and is consequently more likely to remain its proper dictionary pronunciation (Grant 2014, 27). Therefore, we must not only guide our students through the perception and production of individual forms but also explain their functions. Without such knowledge, students have little motivation to acquire them (Grant 2014, 18).

### **2.2.3 Perception and production**

In terms of pronunciation, NNSs differ from NSs not only in their speech production but also in the perception of L2 speech. In fact, the perception and production of L2 speech are interwoven. Studies propose that a number of pronunciation errors are a result of difficulties at a perception level and that “appropriate perceptual training can lead to automatic improvement in production” (Derwing, Munro 2005, 388). The perception difficulties comprise “discrimination: an inability to hear the difference between the two sounds and identification: determining which of the two sounds has been presented” (Derwing, Munro 2015, 36). The perception-production relationship was proven in an experiment in which Japanese speakers improved their /l/ - /r/ production solely based on perception trainings (Bradlow et al. 1997, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 24). Perceptual tasks can be also useful in the identification of problematic areas for L2 speakers. Such tasks include discriminations of segments or words, odd-one-out and matching activities. Production practice and testing can be then elicited through visual materials, reading aloud, monologues, repetitions, interactions or mimicry (Munro, Derwing 2015, 22-23).

Although it seems quite logical that students should first be able to perceive the previously insignificant differences in L2 speech, and then proceed to their productions, other studies suggest that the relationship is more complex and that L2 speakers are sometimes unable to distinguish certain sounds, yet encounter no difficulties in their productions (Sheldon & Strange 1982, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 36). Other studies even suggest the reverse relationship between perception and production; that is that perception can be informed by production. Linebaugh and Roche created an experiment in which 46 Arabic speakers received either articulatory training or focused exposure to three problematic segmental contrasts for Arabic speakers in English; /æ/ and /ʌ/, /e/ and /ɔ/, /g/ and /dʒ/ (Linebaugh, Roche 2015, A1). The results showed that the participants who received articulatory training statistically improved in their perceptual ability in two of the three contrasts while the perceptually trained participants improved only in one of the contrasts. Furthermore, the first group also retained the results for at least one week after the training while the improvement in the other group disappeared within a week (Linebaugh, Roche 2015, A7).

As we can see, the relationship between perception and production is quite complex. Therefore, what is of most importance to teachers is the realization that L2 speakers perceive and produce the L2 speech differently from NSs and explicit instruction in both perception and production focusing on particularly problematic areas is crucial.

#### 2.2.4 Pronunciation syllabus

So what should the pronunciation syllabus actually look like? To answer this question a pronunciation syllabus at The Intensive English Program at Indiana University might be considered. The syllabus differs in terms of three basic levels of proficiency; low-levels for true to high beginning students, mid-levels for intermediate students and high-levels for high-intermediate to low advanced students (Darcy et al. 2012, 6). The following chart summarizes the focal points for each proficiency levels.

	Proficiency level		
	Low-levels	Mid-levels	High-levels
<b>Segmentals</b>	Elements of phonics	Elements of phonics	Vowels
	Practice alphabet; consonants	Tense and lax vowels	Phonics
	Vowel length	Final consonants and clusters	Individual needs
	Final consonants and clusters		
<b>Suprasegmentals</b>	Basic intonation	Word stress	Intonation patterns
	Declarative, question, request vs. apology	Sentence stress, intonation	Sentence stress
	Stress perception	Vowel reduction (schva)	Linking
		Rhythm	Phonotactics
		Linking	Register awareness

**Figure 2.4: Pronunciation instruction syllabus by Darcy et al. 2012 (adapted)**

For the beginner level, the focus is on the basic phonemic inventory, particularly on consonants with a high functional load. Following are elements with a lower functional load. Students are introduced to the basic stress timing and intonation of declarative and interrogative sentences. At this level, pronunciation instruction is word-based, highly contextualized and metalanguage is not yet used. The phoneme-grapheme correspondences are introduced and the most attention is paid to basic intelligibility and negotiation of

meaning. New words are presented with the correct word stress and problematic pronunciation features pointed out. All aspects of pronunciation instruction are integrated into the communicative lessons (Darcy et al. 2012, 6-7).

The goal of the mid-level instruction remains to be intelligibility. More accurate articulation of vowels is expected including vowel reduction. On a suprasegmental level, the attention shifts from individual words to sentence stress and perception and production of strings of words and sentences. Metalanguage is gradually introduced. Students are taught to become aware of aspects of connected speech and imitate other speakers. More accuracy is also demanded than at the previous level (Darcy et al. 2012, 7-8).

Finally, high-level students focus on being accurate at all times with an emphasis on comprehensibility. Pronunciation instruction can now become independent and stand alone in the class. Metalinguistic terminology is developed and students are expected to be able to monitor, analyze and control their speech. Awareness of register (in this case academic) is of great importance and activities developing vocabulary related to the register are presented (Darcy et al. 2012, 8-9).

Darcy et al. list several principles which should be applied when constructing a pronunciation syllabus. According to them, pronunciation instruction must be introduced early on in order to make students understand that focus on intelligibility and comprehensibility is of great importance. The program should be based both on research and teacher experience. Students at all levels need to be introduced to activities aiming at both perception and production skills. Pronunciation must be integrated into the rest of the syllabus (except for the highest levels) and occur regularly every lesson. Activities must be adapted to suit a particular level of proficiency (Darcy et al. 2012, 9).

### **2.2.5 Learner variables and pronunciation learning**

How much L2 pronunciation is acquired by an ESL student is not only dependent on the effectiveness of received instruction but also on the learner himself. Many factors such as age, aptitude, level of similarity between L1 and L2 and quality and quantity of input are unfortunately beyond the learner's control (Derwing, Munro 2014b, 15) let alone the

teacher's. Such factors are of course not unique for pronunciation but applicable to all aspects of L2 acquisition. What is different in the case of pronunciation is, however, the importance of certain learner variables which might create greater obstacles than in other language skills.

#### **2.2.5.1 Early versus late learners**

Age is undoubtedly one of the most studied factors influencing L2 pronunciation. We do not have to be linguistic researchers to come to the conclusion that generally, the younger the student is the better chance he has to acquire L2 pronunciation to a high standard. The research supports this saying and claims that the pronunciation of a typical adult L2 learner is not likely to achieve native or near-native level, even though the adult might excel in the language skills such as reading or writing (Derwing, Munro 2015, 31). This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as the Joseph Conrad Effect (Scovel 1988, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 31) who, despite an outstanding written word, was not able to get rid of his heavy English accent.

Researchers generally agree on the negative relationship between age of learning (AOL) and pronunciation: “older learners typically ha[ve] stronger accents (even after many years of L2 experience), and the likelihood of speaking without a detectable foreign accent diminishe[s] with increased AOL” (Derwing, Munro 2015, 31-32). What we do not know, however, is whether there is some connection between AOL on the one hand and intelligibility and comprehensibility on the other. If we disregard the Nativeness Principle which aspires to produce L2 speakers undistinguishable from NSs, the problem becomes rather simple. From the Intelligibility Principle's point of view, we must conclude that “intelligible, comprehensible speech is not only possible in adult L2 learners, but that it is the norm rather than the exception” (Derwing, Munro 2015, 51). Such perspective is, in our opinion, more feasible, as neither we, nor our students have any control of AOL, and the primary goal of pronunciation instruction is to guide students in understanding and being understood.

### 2.2.5.2 Other factors

AOL is not, however, the only factor on the side of the learner. Purcell and Suter analyzed 11 other speaker variables in order to conclude which had the greatest impact on L2 pronunciation. The four statistically significant factors in Purcell and Suter's research proved to be: L1, aptitude for oral mimicry, length of residence (LOR), and strength of concern for pronunciation accuracy. The speaker's L1 was either seen as favored or unfavored depending on whether it helped or hindered the pronunciation accuracy (Purcell, Suter 1980, 285). Based on their research, Purcell and Suter created theoretical descriptions of the superior and poor listener which are simplified in the following figure (Purcell, Suter 1980, 285).

Factors	Superior pronouncer	Poor pronouncer
<b>L1</b>	NS of the favored language, e.g. Arabic or Persian	NS of the unfavored language, e.g. Japanese or Thai
<b>Skills</b>	good oral mimic	poor oral mimics
<b>LOR</b>	has lived in an English-speaking country for a number of years	recently arrived in an English-speaking country
<b>L2 use at home</b>	shares a home with a NS of English	does not reside with a NS of English
<b>Motivation</b>	concerned about their pronunciation accuracy in English	not concerned about their pronunciation accuracy in English

**Figure 2.5: Superior versus poor pronouncer by Purcell and Suter (1980)**

Although LOR is an important factor for Purcell and Suter, a study by Oyama came to the opposite conclusion (Oyama 1976, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 39); that is, LOR is irrelevant in pronunciation acquisition. This suggests that simply listing LOR as a learner variable is too broad as the experience can greatly differ for each speaker; some immigrants can surround themselves with NSs of the target language and quickly improve while other remain in their L1 communities and barely use the L2 (Piske et al. 2001, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 41). Consequently, what is more relevant in pronunciation acquisition is language experience which may or may not go hand in hand with LOR. In an experiment which tested the fluency and accent development in Mandarin and Slavic immigrants, Derwing et al. discovered that overall, Slavic immigrants notably improved their fluency while Mandarin speakers did not. Although the two groups reported



comparable levels of exposure to television and radio in English, the Slavic speakers spent significantly more time interacting with both native and nonnative speakers in English (Derwing et al. 2006, 191). The experiment, therefore, proves that LOR is of little importance to L2 speakers. Language experience, on the other hand, is more relevant.

In their definition of a good pronouncer, Purcell and Suter also claim that “whether or not [the learner] has had much or little formal instruction in English or English pronunciation is of no importance” (Purcell and Suter 1980, 285). This passage was intentionally taken out of the previously listed figure as the importance of pronunciation instruction has been already accounted for in this paper. Purcell and Suter’s conclusion that pronunciation instruction is not important might have been due to the fact that they did not concern themselves with intelligibility, comprehensibility or fluency but only accentedness (Derwing, Munro 2015, 48).

There are of course other factors influencing pronunciation acquisition such as gender, learning styles, personality and others. But how can teachers benefit from the empirical findings? The most important recognition is that “adult L2 pronunciation is both learnable and teachable” (Derwing, Munro 2015, 50). Students can benefit from information on how to effectively initiate and maintain a conversation in order to maximize their L2 opportunities (Derwing, Munro 2015, 51). Increased awareness of pronunciation importance might then lead to greater motivation to practice the L2 and further interest in mastering pronunciation. It should be expected by teachers that not all learners will, however, improve at the same rate. What must be also taken into account are individual differences such as aptitude (Derwing, Munro 2015, 52).

#### **2.2.6 Struggles with pronunciation instruction**

Pronunciation instruction in the classroom is problematic for several reasons. It is true that the past few decades saw a renewed interest in teaching pronunciation. When compared with other disciplines of L2 acquisition, however, pronunciation remains to be the least researched one (Derwing, Munro 2005, 379). Furthermore, the empirical evidence that does exist is not likely to reach the most practitioners since journals specializing in pronunciation such as *Journal of Phonetics* or *Language and Speech* are typically designed

for phoneticians only. Even if reached by teachers, some of the studies presented in such journals would be of little use to teachers due to its laboratory conditions and lack of direct implications for the classroom (Derwing, Munro 2005, 382).

The absence of materials and training sessions available for teachers leads to confusion “about how to integrate appropriate pronunciation instruction into second language classrooms” (Derwing, Munro 2005, 383). The teachers might then avoid teaching pronunciation completely because they “lack confidence, skills and knowledge” (MacDonald 2002, cited in Derwing, Munro 2005, 389). The more courageous ones choose to teach pronunciation based on their intuition. Using intuition in L2 teaching is not necessarily wrong, however, it cannot be expected that all teachers have high critical skills and phonological awareness needed to correctly determine how to instruct their students in pronunciation (Derwing, Munro 2005, 389). Levis, for instance, noted that “present intonational research is almost completely divorced from modern language teaching” (Levis 1999, cited in Derwing, Munro 2005, 382). Teachers with no pronunciation training are likely to focus solely on the most salient features of foreign accents irrelevant to intelligibility and depend on materials such as textbooks which are likely to provide limited pronunciation instruction that does not match the students’ needs (Derwing, Munro 2005, 389). The situation, might, however, be slowly changing as there has been more attention paid to pronunciation and more materials dealing with pronunciation published within the last few years. Some of those worth mentioning are the *PronPack* series by Mark Hancock (2017), *Second Language Pronunciation Assessment: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* by Talia Isaacks and Pavel Trofimovich (Eds.) (2016) or *Pronunciation in the Classroom: The Overlooked Essential* by Tamara Jones (Ed.) (2016).

Teachers who are aware of research on pronunciation instruction that is teacher-friendly and classroom-applicable can set realistic and relevant pronunciation goals based on empirical evidence. Although students might aspire to achieve native pronunciation, for most of them, it is beyond their capacity. Teachers’ pedagogical priorities should, therefore, be in accord with the Intelligibility Principle as well as encouraging them to fulfill their entire potential (Derwing, Munro 2005, 384). Furthermore, teachers must be aware of phenomena such as functional load which can help them establish what errors are of great

importance and need special attention, and which can be overlooked (Derwing, Munro 2005, 391). A teacher who understands the importance of pronunciation is indisputably more likely to determine what causes most problems in particular L2 speech and tailor the pronunciation instruction to the students' needs (Derwing, Munro 2005, 388).

Another phenomenon to be discussed is the fact that interactions in English often take place between two NNSs and therefore “more attention should also be focused on the[ir] mutual intelligibility” (Derwing, Munro 2005, 392). An immigrant to an English-speaking country is likely to face different pronunciation problems than a NNS trying to communicate in English with another NNS of a different L1. It is only beneficial, however, if ESL learners, as well as EFL learners, are able to communicate with a number of different speakers, both native and nonnative. What can be done to improve mutual intelligibility among speakers of different backgrounds is to introduce our students to a number of accents, both native and foreign and focus on particular differences. To do so, computer-assisted language learning (CALL) can be of use. Internet, as well as various software programs, can be applied in the classroom, however, teachers must be able to “critically evaluate these materials” to provide “content that is linguistically and pedagogically sound” (Derwing, Munro 2005, 391).

### **2.2.7 Pronunciation errors and their analysis**

To provide effective pronunciation instruction and feedback, teachers must first learn to recognize and address pronunciation errors in L2 speech. Although such a task seems to be straightforward, especially for native English speaking teachers whose ears immediately detect any deviation from native speech standards, the classroom reality might be far from that. Lacking pronunciation teaching training and short of proper materials, teachers are much more likely to focus on errors related to grammar and vocabulary and ignore those related to phonology. Furthermore, it is necessary that teachers assess the students' phonological errors in terms of their gravity and communicate this knowledge to their students in an easy-to-understand yet informative manner.

### 2.2.7.1 What is a pronunciation error?

Derwing and Munro (2015) see pronunciation errors as “cases in which a speaker aims to produce an utterance, but as a result of a lack of full control over its segmental or suprasegmental structure, produces something else instead” (Derwing, Munro 2015, 57). The authors further state that their definition does not include occasional instances of “speech blunders, slips of the tongue or false starts” which are seen as performance mistakes rather than pronunciation errors. (Derwing, Munro 2015, 57). The definition encompasses errors on segmental as well as suprasegmental level. The classification of segmental errors is summarized in the following figure (Derwing, Munro 2015, 58).

Classification of L2 segmental errors		
Type of error	Description	Example
<b>Insertion</b>	including a segment not present in the target form	/lɪvəd/ for ‘lived’ (/lɪvd/)
<b>Deletion</b>	not including a segment not present in the target form	/sɪk/ for ‘six’ (/sɪks/)
<b>Substitution</b>	replacing a segment in the target form with a segment from a different phonemic category	/kʌt/ for ‘cat’ (/kæt/)
<b>Distortion</b>	producing a segment in the target form in a way that may be noticeably non-target, but which does not change the phonemic category of the segment	/kʌt/ instead of /kæt/ produced with audible but short aspiration instead of target-like longer aspiration

**Figure 2.6: Classification of L2 segmental errors by Derwing and Munro (2015)**

Some originally segmental errors might affect the suprasegmental level as well such as the insertion of schwa in the word ‘lived.’ The insertion of an extra sound changes the number of syllables from one to two and also affects the word structure CVCC to CVC where ‘C’ stands for a consonant and ‘V’ for a vowel (Derwing, Munro 2015, 58).

Suprasegmental errors refer to errors related to sentence stress, word stress, intonation and rhythm. Highlighting the most important word of a sentence by giving it the most prominence is often something new to L2 students of English. As a result, they struggle to understand the difference between ‘SHE likes coffee’ and ‘She likes COFFEE’ where capitalization shows which word is prominent. Placing the word stress on the wrong syllable might seriously affect the intelligibility of the target word. Derwing and Munro carried out an experiment during which a French politician incorrectly pronounces the

word 'develop' (/dɪ'veləp/ as (/dɪvəl'ap/). Even though the listeners, both native and nonnative speakers of English, were played the word within its context, many found it unintelligible. Word stress errors influence the word at a segmental level as well since they change the individual vowels which are either reduced to a schwa or become full vowels. Although intonation is generally linked with stress, errors related solely to the variations in the pitch might be difficult to assess. Intonation might indicate a grammatical function such as rising intonation in declarative questions (e.g. *You're leaving?*) but also attitudes towards the speaker or the discussed matter. In English, the rhythm consists of an alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables. Mastering the English rhythm is especially difficult for speakers whose L1 uses a syllable-timed rhythm such as Czech in which all syllables last about the same time. Carrying L1 patterns into English utterances might result in decreased intelligibility. This area was studied by Tajima, Port and Dalby (1997, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 61). The researchers digitally corrected Mandarin-accented utterances in English and manipulated the rhythm of native English utterances to match the foreign timing patterns. The corrected L2 speech proved to be more intelligible for the listeners than the original one. The distortion of native speech had the opposite effect on the intelligibility (Tajima, Port and Dalby 1997, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 59-61).

Apart from segmental and suprasegmental errors, we can find other issues that affect the intelligibility and comprehensibility of L2 speech such as fluency, speaking rate, voice quality and speaking habits. While it is clear that there is a great variation between speakers in terms of their fluency, L2 speech is generally perceived as less fluent than native speech. For obvious reasons, L2 speakers are more prone to false starts, hesitations and undesirable pauses which can influence their understanding. Similarly, if they speak at a pace that is too slow in comparison to L1 speech, listeners might also struggle with intelligibility. Voice quality features such as high pitch, breathiness or creaky voice can also add to misunderstandings, especially when they are followed by certain habits such as mouth covering while speaking, low volume or nonnative hesitation noises. Although the issues mentioned in this paragraph are not pronunciation errors per se, teachers must be aware of their potential danger, particularly in combination with segmental and suprasegmental errors (Derwing, Munro 2015, 61-62).

#### 2.2.7.2 Error analysis

The majority of pronunciation errors is unsurprisingly related to the speaker's L1. In fact, the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis approach to errors claims that pronunciation errors can be predicted by comparison of the phonological inventories of L1 and L2. The items that differ in the languages cause greater difficulties while items which occur in both inventories are mastered with ease (Derwing, Munro 2015, 63). Other approaches to pronunciation errors focus on markedness which refers to phonological features that are uncommon for world languages. An example of a marked feature would be the English phoneme /θ/ due to its relative rarity among languages (Derwing, Munro 2015, 70). Unfortunately, when it comes to errors, there is great variability among learners, even those of the same L1 and level of proficiency. Therefore, error prediction is of little value to teachers. In fact, it might lead to inappropriate syllabus choices and ignorance of actual errors in the classroom (Derwing, Munro 2015, 75-76).

Many pronunciation errors are highly salient. Some of them might not, however, cause any serious problems while others are likely to lead to communication breakdowns. To determine their gravity and prioritize their acquisition, one can apply the concept of functional load which refers to the “importance of linguistic phenomena in distinguishing meanings in a language” (Derwing, Munro 2015, 74). The functional load is related to the number of minimal pairs, the frequency of words in these pairs and whether or not the words in a pair share the same word class. The opposition between /p/ and /b/, for instance, has a higher functional load than the /θ/ and /ð/ opposition as there are more minimal pairs determined by /p/ and /b/ sounds (such as *pet-bet*, *pat-bat*, *pea-bee*) than there are for /θ/ and /ð/ (*thigh-thy*). If both words in a pair are frequently used, the chances of confusion are greater when one or both words are uncommon. If both words refer to the same word class, e.g. a noun, the risk of misunderstanding is again greater than when each word belongs to a different word class. These findings are summarized in the following figure (Derwing, Munro 2015, 75).

Computation of functional load	
Factor	Outcome
Number of minimal pairs	more pairs = higher functional load
Frequency of occurrence of words in the pairs	both words very common = highest functional load one word uncommon, the other common = lower functional load both words uncommon = lowest functional load
Word class of words in the pairs	both words are the same word class = higher functional load

**Figure 2.7: Computation of functional load by Derwing and Munro (2015)**

Munro and Derwing (2006) conducted an experiment in which they tested whether the theoretical knowledge on functional load can serve as useful guidance for practice. In the speech of Cantonese speakers, they selected utterances with a high and low functional load. The listeners who had no phonetical training were then asked to judge the sentences in terms of their comprehensibility. The results proved that low functional load errors impacted comprehensibility much less than high functional load errors; sentences with three low functional load errors were still more comprehensible than sentences with one high functional load error. High functional load errors within one sentence, on the other hand, cumulated and caused more comprehensibility issues than a single high functional load error (Munro, Derwing 2006, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 74-75).

### **2.2.7.3 Providing feedback to pronunciation errors**

To raise more phonological awareness in students, teachers must provide not only explicit pronunciation instruction but also appropriate corrective feedback. There are two basic types of corrective feedback: implicit and explicit. Implicit feedback such as recast during which the teacher repeats the student's message while correcting the target form is not found to be very useful in the case of pronunciation errors. Students might not hear any difference between their utterance and the teacher's and simply assume the teacher's recast is a confirmation of their grammatical or vocabulary choice. Explicit feedback, on the other hand, makes sure students understand that what needs to be corrected is a form error and not a meaning error. Drawing students' attention to their phonological errors can be done in a variety of ways which are summarized in the following figure (Darcy 2018, 28-29).

Explicit feedback	
Type of explicit feedback	Example
Stating the difficulty during instruction	“This is difficult, this is where people make mistakes.”
Noting an error when providing feedback	“You’ve made a (pronunciation) mistake.”
Drawing attention to the area of difficulty during instruction.	“Look at this specific word and its pronunciation.”
Providing specific feedback describing the error.	“You’ve pronounced ____ like ____.”
Providing explicit means of correction	“This is what you should do.”

**Figure 2.8: Explicit feedback by Darcy (2018)**

Providing such explicit feedback can help students become aware of their pronunciation errors which might have otherwise remained unnoticed. Once they are aware of the differences between their speech and that of a native speaker, they can self-correct and self-monitor their pronunciation. Furthermore, not only their production but also their perception might improve due to the provided explicit information on the phonological level of L2 (Darcy 2018, 29).

### **2.2.8 Who should teach pronunciation?**

Pronunciation instruction is even more complicated by the following question: *Should only native English speaking teachers teach pronunciation?* Although many laymen might suggest that it is solely native English speaking teachers (NESTs) as they represent the “true” English, the answer is not as straightforward. In his article on the differences between (NESTs) and nonnative English speaking teachers (NNESTs), Medgyes (2001) claims that both groups can be equally good teachers. According to him, a multilingual teacher is more capable than a monolingual teacher. He sees an ideal NNEST as somebody who has achieved a near-native proficiency in L2 while an ideal NEST has achieved a fair degree of proficiency in the students’ L1. Although NNESTs are in some aspects disadvantaged over NESTs, Medgyes lists several advantages of the teachers who share the L1 with their students. First of all, they serve as proper learner models to their students showing that English can be obtained to a high-proficiency level. They teach language-learning strategies with more ease benefiting from their own learning experience which helps them set more realistic goals. They also benefit from the use of L1 in the classroom



(Medgyes 2001, 415-428). Although Medgyes discusses the context of TEFL, we believe his points are applicable to pronunciation instruction as well.

Grant explains that the majority of ESL and EFL teachers worldwide are NNESTs who, however, often feel reluctant to teach pronunciation, mostly because they “feel insecure about the quality of their own pronunciation even when such feelings are unwarranted” (Grant 2014, 205). This is a significant problem for the field of pronunciation instruction bearing in mind that NESTs represent a minority in TESL and TEFL contexts. Similarly to Medgyes, Grant also recognizes various advantages of NNESTs in terms of pronunciation teaching. She, for instance, claims that NNESTs who underwent pronunciation teaching themselves are more likely to understand the acquisition from the student’s point of view rather than the teacher’s. A NEST can be seen as a relevant yet obtainable language model, even if his speech remains accented. The NNEST’s intelligibility and comprehensibility must however not be compromised and he needs to be aware of nonnative characteristics of his speech (Grant 2014, 205-206).

Unfortunately, in some EFL and ESL contexts, the common practice is to select NESTs for language areas such as pronunciation and conversation and NNESTs are left to teach grammar and the four skills. Such a situation is clearly not optimal as it “reinforces the notion that there is something inherently wrong with having an L2 accent, and that only a native speaker has the wherewithal to effectively teach pronunciation” (Derwing, Munro 2015, 81). A study by Levis et al. investigated the impact of pronunciation instruction received by a NEST versus by a high proficiency bilingual teacher while the syllabus, materials, students’ background and proficiency level remained comparable. The pre and post-tests supported the belief that both groups of students achieved significant progress irrelevant of their teacher’s native status (Levis et al. 2013, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 81-82). The research, therefore, speaks very clearly; it is by no means true that only NESTs should be allowed to teach pronunciation. Not only can NNESTs be equally good pronunciation teachers, they might even surpass NESTs in some cases.

### **2.3 Current state of pronunciation instruction in the TEFL classroom**

Despite the increased interest in the field, pronunciation instruction still falls behind the other areas of TEFL. Teachers' feelings regarding pronunciation instruction include lack of confidence, fear of embarrassment of the students, inability to integrate pronunciation into the syllabus and absence of training (MacDonald 2002, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 80). Absence of training is probably responsible for many of the negative views on teaching pronunciation by teachers. Henderson et al. (2012) carried out a survey in which they asked 635 teachers from a number of European countries to evaluate their professional pronunciation training. The survey showed that most participants received little or no training at all. Nevertheless, most respondents realized the importance of pronunciation in L2 teaching (Henderson et al. 2012, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 81).

Some of the positive aspects of current pronunciation instruction taking place in the classroom are summarized by Grant. He claims current pronunciation instruction is a combination of communicative and audiolingual approaches. Minimal pair drills are still employed but in more interactive ways with the added focus on the meaning. More attention is paid to suprasegmental features than in the past and teachers are likely to follow the Intelligibility Principle. Furthermore, models of English used in the classroom include a range of native as well as nonnative accents (Grant 2014, 4-6).

Other current practices, however, are not without problems. Studies conclude that many teachers do not systematically integrate pronunciation instruction into their syllabus; instead they occasionally correct pronunciation errors and some focus on certain pronunciation aspects as well (Henderson et al. 2012, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 78). Those teachers who integrate pronunciation might still spend very little time on it. The 99 respondents of a survey by Foote et al., for instance, reported spending only 6% of the class time on pronunciation in which segmental features received the most attention (Foote et al. 2011, cited in Grant 2014, 7).

Derwing and Munro claim that pronunciation instruction is "somewhat hit and miss" (Derwing, Munro 2015, 78). While some teachers might attempt to integrate pronunciation instruction into general language classes, others spent little or no time on it.

We should also be aware of the possible bias of surveys focusing on pronunciation since teachers who do not incorporate pronunciation instruction into their classes are not likely to participate (Derwing, Munro 2015, 78). Individual differences between teachers are also studied by Tergujeff (2012). In her study of Finnish teachers' practices, she discovered that students received pronunciation instruction with the majority focusing on segmental features but the extent greatly differed depending on the teacher. During one lesson, one teacher was observed to employ any kind of pronunciation instruction only four times while another teacher sixty-two times (Tergujeff 2012, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 79).

Not only teachers differ in the extent of provided pronunciation instruction but so do the materials used in the classroom. Derwing et al. (2012) analyzed 12 series of books from several publishers and found staggering differences. Some series contained little to no pronunciation instruction while others offered numerous pronunciation activities. There were also shocking differences within one series when different levels were compared and opportunities to revise what was previously learned were often missing. The authors concluded that the materials were insufficient in terms of pronunciation instruction support they provided for teachers (Derwing et al. 2012, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 79). This is rather unfortunate as teachers who struggle with pronunciation instruction are likely to rely heavily on printed materials available to them. While interviewing students, Tergujeff, for instance, discovered that Finnish teachers rarely skipped any parts of the textbooks and if some activities were not completed in the class they were assigned as homework (Tergujeff 2013, cited in Derwing, Munro 2015, 79). The quality of pronunciation material provided in EFL elementary level course books is also discussed in the diploma thesis by Brabcová who claims that teachers cannot solely rely on textbooks regarding pronunciation instruction but rather on their own knowledge and particular needs of their students (Brabcová 2016, 62). Unfortunately, it cannot be expected of teachers who are untrained and often equipped with insufficient materials to teach pronunciation systematically and effectively. Many aspects of the current situation must be changed in to raise the quality as well as the quantity of pronunciation instruction provided to L2 learners.

### 2.3.1 Teachers' and students' beliefs

The last but not least important view of looking at pronunciation instruction is that of teachers and students themselves. Even though both groups tend to be aware of the importance of pronunciation and its connection to all other skill areas, it is often neglected when it comes to TEFL (Darcy 2018, 16). There are several reasons for this 'pronunciation teaching paradox' as Darcy calls it. A survey conducted by Darcy, Ewert and Lidster (2012) proved that the participating teachers believed pronunciation instruction is crucial in most contexts and situations the students encounter. They were, however, less confident in providing such instruction and stated that they rarely spent time on it. 12 out of 14 teachers did not feel satisfied with their pronunciation instruction for various reasons. The most common ones were lack of time, institutional support and uncertainty about how to teach pronunciation. The teachers did not know what methods would be effective and what pronunciation features they should focus on. Furthermore, they sought reassurance that their pronunciation instruction would be beneficial for their students outside the classroom. Although the number of respondents was relatively small, the survey showed clear patterns of the struggles teachers face (Darcy 2018, 16-17). The following chart summarized the most common concerns teachers have about pronunciation instruction (Darcy 2018, 19).

Obstacles in pronunciation teaching	
Type of obstacle	Particular concerns
Time obstacle	Class time is too short to teach pronunciation. Beginners are too busy learning grammar and vocabulary to focus on pronunciation. Students are not assessed in pronunciation anyway.
Method obstacle	Intonation is hard to teach. I don't know how to teach pronunciation. Repeat-after-me and minimal pair drills are boring. I am not a native speaker of English. Their pronunciation is fossilized. Pronunciation instruction doesn't work. Students don't want to work on it.
Focus obstacle	They'll pick it up on their own. I don't know what to focus on. My students have so many L1 backgrounds that I can't meet their pronunciation needs.

Figure 2.9: Obstacles in pronunciation teaching by Darcy (2018) (adapted)

To learn more about the students' beliefs on their accents, an area not much studied in the past, Derwing (2003) conducted a survey whose participants were 100 adult immigrants taking part in an ESL community college program in Alberta. The participants came from nineteen different language backgrounds and their English levels varied from low intermediate to high intermediate. All chosen participants had noticeably accented speech. The results showed 55 participants believed that pronunciation played a role in their communication problems. Although many were unable to say what particular pronunciation problems they faced, others identified mostly segmental problems and only a small percentage referred to prosodical problems. Some errors stated were the *th* sounds, *l/r* distinction and other vowels and consonants, stress and intonation. 97 respondents believed it is important to pronounce English well and 82 wished to pronounce like a native speaker one day. Many participants experienced a negative encounter in Canada due to their accented speech described as "People make rude comments, they tell me that I should take pronunciation classes" or "Sometimes people choose not to understand" (Derwing 2003, 552-557).

Overall, the survey showed that although almost all participants realized the significance of pronunciation many were unable to describe what their problems were. Those who listed particular pronunciation errors often focused on aspects which were unlikely to impact their intelligibility such as the *th* sounds. Little attention was given to prosody which often affects intelligibility. The data suggest the students received little to no pronunciation instruction with little focus on the key aspects of intelligibility. The students would welcome more support from their teachers in terms of pronunciation development. Furthermore, they should be encouraged to understand the many reasons why communication problems occur, especially those on the side of the listener. The students would also benefit from setting more realistic goals since the majority of them aspires to a native pronunciation level; a level that is beyond reach for most EFL students (Derwing 2003, 559-563).

To conclude, there are many misconceptions about pronunciation instruction on the side of the teacher and consequently the learner as well. Since teachers themselves do not feel confident to teach pronunciation and struggle with time, techniques and instruction choices

it is only natural that students are not aware of their key pronunciation issues and their effects. To see whether these beliefs found in literature correspond to those of our research subjects (both teachers and students), we asked the participants to complete a questionnaire on pronunciation teaching and learning respectively. Their beliefs are analyzed in the practical part of this thesis (see sections 4.2 and 4.3).

## **2.4 Common pronunciation aspects of Czech English**

To analyze pronunciation instruction provided for Czech students of English it is first necessary to look at how Czech English deviates from the native norm. We are especially interested in aspects that are likely to affect intelligibility and comprehensibility favoring the Intelligibility Principle over the Nativeness Principle. The same approach will be employed in the practical part of the thesis.

In his book *How to Teach Pronunciation* Gerald Kelly explains that pronunciation difficulties of English learners may stem from five different areas. The students' L1 might display a one-to-one correspondence between sounds and spelling and so the concept of a different relationship (such as that in English) might be new and confusing. Even if their L1 does not have a one-to-one correspondence, the relationship between spelling and pronunciation is likely to be different than the one in English. English may also contain sounds and their combinations (such as complicated consonant clusters) which are not employed in the students' L1 (and vice versa). Finally, the English use of stress and intonation can feel odd for its greater role compared to their L1 (Kelly 2000, 8). All of these points apply to Czech students studying English.

In a recent experiment, Skarnitzl and Rumlová analyzed the English of ten strongly-accented Czech speakers to establish what the most prominent native features of Czech English are. Their findings are divided into five categories: vowels and consonants in the segmental area, word stress, rhythmical and melodic patterning in the suprasegmental area (Skarnitzl, Rumlová 2019, in print).

### 2.4.1 Vowels

As can be seen in the following schema, the English vowel inventory is richer than the Czech inventory which might, of course, lead to problems for Czech speakers.

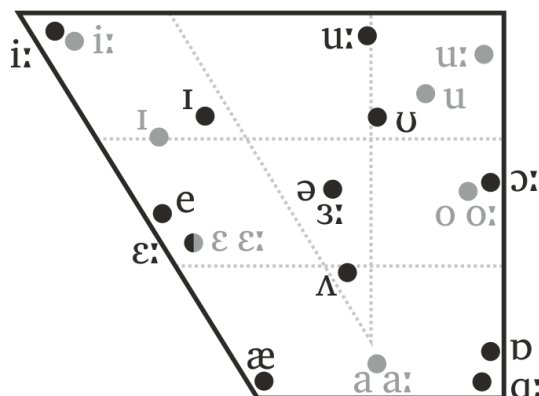


Figure 2.10: Schematic comparison of the British English (in black) and Czech (in grey) systems of monophthongs. Based on Hawkins and Midgley (2005) for English, and Skarnitzl and Volín (2012) for Czech. In Skarnitzl, Rumlová 2019, in print.

The most problematic vowel seems to be the open front vowel /æ/ typically pronounced as a closer (mid to open-mid) vowel, /ε/. To achieve contrast with the short /e/ Czechs generally rely on the duration of the vowels (Šimáčková 2003, cited in Skarnitzl, Rumlová 2019, in print). The short open /ɒ/ (which only occurs in British English) was expected to be pronounced as the Czech mid /o/, and the pair /ʌ/–/ɑ:/ with the Czech open central vowels /a/–/a:/ (Skarnitzl, Rumlová 2019, in print). The experiment confirmed these hypotheses (Skarnitzl, Rumlová 2019, in print).

### 2.4.2 Consonants

Notorious for their difficulty are the dental fricatives /θ/ and /ð/. Although the functional load of these sounds is not that high, the ability to pronounce them correctly is relatively important as some of the incorrect pronunciations tend to be stigmatized around the world. Furthermore, the dental fricative /ð/ is the sixth most frequent phoneme which occurs in many grammatical words (Skarnitzl, Rumlová 2019, in print). The experiment concluded that the voiced /ð/ was more difficult for Czech speakers and was often realized by the plosive /d/ while the voiceless /θ/ was substituted by the plosive /t/ (Skarnitzl, Rumlová 2019, in print). Czech learners also struggle with the /w/–/v/ distinction and the individual phonemes are often confused for one another. The velar nasal /ŋ/, if not incorrectly

pronounced as an /n/ is often followed by a plosive sound (e.g., *singing* /sɪŋɪŋk/). Finally, there is a voicing contrast in final positions in English while the same contrast is neutralized in Czech (such as *spát* and *spád*). Czech learners can, therefore, find it difficult to distinguish between minimal pairs such as *dock* and *dog* (Skarnitzl, Rumlová 2019, in print).

### **2.4.3 Word stress**

The two languages diametrically differ in their word stress realization. Czech is a syllable-stressed language with stress fixed on the first syllable of the prosodic word. English stress is, on the other hand, contrastive and its rules are not as straightforward as the ones in Czech. Furthermore, unstressed syllables often become reduced to a schwa /ə/. This results in the Czech-accented schwas being too prominent (Skarnitzl, Rumlová 2019, in print). The experiment confirmed that the schwa vowels are often realized with the so-called spelling pronunciation, most commonly substituted with the mid front /ɛ/ (in words like *system* or *operate*) and mid back /o/ (in words like *completely* or *official*). The open vowel /a/ also occurred in word ends such as *India* or *idea* (Skarnitzl, Rumlová 2019, in print).

### **2.4.4 Rhythmical patterning**

The research by Skarnitzl and Rumlová verified that Czech speakers link less often than native speakers, even though linking was more likely to take place when the vowel-initial word was grammatical (e.g., *millions of*, *save it*) than when it was lexical (e.g., *should allow*, *in effect*) (Skarnitzl, Rumlová 2019, in print).

### **2.4.5 Melodic patterning**

While Czech allows relatively free word order, English word order conforms to much stricter rules. When it comes to expressing prominence, word order changes are often preferred in Czech while English tends to rely more on melodic cues. This results in a much wider pitch range in English and a rather flat intonation in Czech (Skarnitzl, Rumlová 2019, in print). The experiment confirmed that the pitch range of Czech English is quite narrow (Skarnitzl, Rumlová 2019, in print).



### **3 Methodology**

The practical part of this thesis aims to analyze the employment of pronunciation instruction in the TEFL classroom as well as the teachers' and students' beliefs regarding pronunciation teaching and learning. The findings will then be compared with the data provided in the literature. The research consists of two main components: classroom observations and teachers' and students' surveys. To obtain a sufficient amount of classroom data within a single group of students (to ensure a homogenous environment), a class of high intermediate students and their teachers at Swallow School of English in Liberec were chosen to participate in the experiment. The observations were immediately followed by surveys administered to the teachers and students previously observed. The received data will help us determine whether our hypotheses based on the literature data were accurate. We are mainly interested in the following assumptions regarding TEFL classrooms:

1. Pronunciation instruction is nonexistent or appears sporadically only.
2. Teachers realize the importance of pronunciation instruction but do not reflect this belief in the classroom.
3. If some pronunciation instruction appears, the focus tends to be on segmental rather than suprasegmental features.
4. Students would welcome increased emphasis on explicit pronunciation instruction.
5. Students are not knowledgeable about their pronunciation errors.
6. There is a clash between the research in pronunciation instruction and its employment in the classroom.

Furthermore, the observations and surveys are employed to answer some specific questions regarding pronunciation instruction practices in TEFL classrooms:

1. How much time is typically spent on pronunciation in a 90-minute lesson?
2. Which aspects of pronunciation tend to be taught and which are omitted?
3. Is the observation data in accord with the survey results?
4. What are the reasons behind avoiding pronunciation instruction?
5. Which pronunciation teaching principle is preferred by teachers and their students, the Nativeness Principle or the Intelligibility Principle?

6. Are typical pronunciation problems of Czech students taken into consideration in the lessons?

### **3.1 Classroom observation**

#### **3.1.1 Participants**

The teaching subjects of the observation were four TEFL teachers working at Swallow School of English in Liberec; three of them were native speakers of English (T1-T3), one was a native speaker sharing the mother tongue with their students (T4). These teachers (as well as the author of the thesis) alternate daily in teaching a group of students attending a post-secondary two-semester-long course of English. The teachers have been teaching the class every week since September 2018, therefore, the teachers had enough time to become familiar with the class and determine their needs regarding English instruction. Since the author of this thesis also regularly teaches the class, the fifth teacher was at first sought to replace her during the two weeks of observation. The idea was, however, later reconsidered having realized that the new teacher would not have any previous experience with the class and the observation and survey results would be misleading. The main advantages of the experiment were found to be in the single group of students shared by several teachers as well as the number of lessons which could be observed in a relatively short time; the class receives 180 minutes of instruction per weekday which amounts to 15 hours of teaching per week.

The teachers were informed about the experiment several months in advance via electronic mail from the director of the school. They were also allowed to express any reservations they had about the observation and even be replaced by another teacher in case of their unwillingness to participate. All four teachers agreed to take part in the observation which, they had been notified, formed an important part of an MA thesis concerning TEFL teaching, included audio recording material and was followed by a teacher and a student survey. The teachers were not given any information about the particular focus of the observation as this would surely impair the results. Those who showed interest in more information on the research were, however, promised to be given a summary of the thesis and the results concluded from the observation and surveys. To guarantee the anonymity of

the participants (when addressed individually), they will be referred to as T1-T4 in the case of the teachers and S1-S13 in the case of the students.

### **3.1.2 Method**

The observations were scheduled for February 2019. All four teachers were observed on their respective day of teaching two weeks in a row, which means we collected 1440 minutes of data, 360 minutes per teacher. The observations consisted of the unobtrusive presence of the author who took notes of pronunciation instruction and pronunciation error correction taking place in the class. To ensure that all instances of pronunciation instruction including pronunciation error correction were identified, the audio of the entire lessons was also recorded. The recordings were then compared with the notes and any data that was missing was added. The recorded material was only accessible to the author of the thesis and later deleted.

## **3.2 Surveys**

### **3.2.1 Piloting**

To create constructive surveys, the handbook *Questionnaires in Second Language Research* by Zoltán Dörnyei (2002) was studied and its tips applied. The first draft of both the teacher and the student survey was composed several months before their administration. Both surveys were several pages long with the estimated time needed for completion to be less than thirty minutes. Both versions began with a brief introduction in which the purpose of the survey was explained and the participants assured that their contribution was anonymous. At the end of the survey, the participants were thanked for their completion. The body of the teacher survey was divided into four parts and the student survey into three parts. The questions were then organized from the broadest ones interested in the general contents of the lessons to more specific ones focusing on pronunciation teaching and learning. The teachers were also asked to provide information on their pronunciation education background which might have played a crucial role in their instruction choices. The last category of questions in both surveys was concerned with personal information related to teaching and learning languages respectively. The teachers completed questions about their native or native status, experience in teaching ESL lessons, education and number of languages spoken. The students were asked to

provide their age, sex and number of languages they speak. The drafts were then consulted with the supervisor and minor changes were made regarding the structure of questions and terminology. The drafts were then showed to several native and native TEFL teachers to detect misleading or sensitive questions. The final version of the teacher and student survey can be found in the appendix of this thesis (Appendix 1 and 2 respectively).

### **3.2.2 Survey administration**

Immediately after the two-week-long observation, the teachers and students completed the surveys. Both the teacher and student survey was administered in person by the author of the thesis who remained present during their completion in case any inquiries occurred. This was especially important for the student survey which was written entirely in English. Even though the questions were formulated with high intermediate L2 readers in mind, it still posed a risk of misunderstanding due to a language barrier. Several students took advantage of the presence of the author and sought the reassurance of their understanding of the survey. The teachers' reactions were even more interesting as they discovered the particular focus of the observations for the first time. All four teachers showed a degree of surprise at the narrow scope of our research on pronunciation instruction, some even included comments about how little pronunciation data must have been collected during their teaching, which was interpreted as openly admitting their lack of attention given to this area. Two out of four teachers, however, showed a deeper interest in the topic of pronunciation instruction and later contacted the author seeking information on pronunciation teaching techniques, pronunciation error correction and their effectiveness.

## **4 Data analysis**

### **4.1 Observation**

It was unfortunately concluded that the observation had given us very little data concerning pronunciation instruction including pronunciation error correction. The observed lessons will, therefore, be analyzed not only in terms of pronunciation-related activities and correction (which occurred sporadically) but also in terms of the possible integration of pronunciation work into some of the activities presented by the teachers. Most attention will be spent on T1 who, as the only one, included some pronunciation instruction and practice. Also, many of the teacher's activities had the potential of including some interesting pronunciation work on a target form. Pronunciation instruction by T2, T3 and T4 was virtually nonexistent except for occasional pronunciation error correction. Therefore, we will look at their correction techniques, analyze their effectiveness and provide some suggestions for suitable integration of pronunciation instruction into their teaching. The observation data will also later be compared with the data provided by the teachers and students in the surveys (see section 5).

#### **4.1.1 Teacher 1**

One of the warm-ups consisted of a question-answer speaking and listening activity. The students were handed two phrase cards each and asked to react to the teacher's questions by reading out the appropriate phrase such as *Don't be silly! If only! Don't shout! Are you ready?* or *Forget it!* All of them consisted of one-tone units which are characteristic for one main tone movement. Many expressed strong feelings such as surprise, anger or irritation and asked for lively intonation. The students, unfortunately, responded with very flat intonation and no personal involvement. Occasionally, the phrase was read with rising intonation corresponding to *yes-no* questions as the student was seeking reassurance from the teacher regarding the choice of phrase card. Other times, the actual *yes-no* questions were read without rising intonation. The only pronunciation hint provided by the teacher was related to the phrase *Forget it!* The teacher explained that the use of an exclamation point in orthography expresses the feeling of anger. This could be seen as an attempt to make the students' English more lively when speaking. It was unfortunately not followed by any practice from the students. The students could have also been asked to produce other phrases in an angry voice. Scrivener, for instance, recommends an activity during

which the students take turns saying phrases such as *Where are you going?* or *Yes, please* with a particular feeling in mind (e.g. angry, delighted or sarcastic) (Scrivener 2011, 271). This activity will raise more pronunciation awareness. It also does not require any phonological knowledge on the side of the teacher and should feel fairly natural to the students who are used to modifying (maybe only unconsciously) their L1 in a similar manner.

Another activity presented by T1 was the Category Game. At first, I perceived the game as a way to ‘kill time in the classroom’ but to my surprise, it turned out to be pronunciation-oriented. The letters were (I believe purposefully) chosen by the teacher in the following order: *p*, *c* and *t* and the students were asked to write words falling into different categories beginning with one of the letters. With the letter *p*, the teacher drew the students’ attention to the words *psychologist* and *pharmacist* which had been produced by the class. The teacher very skillfully integrated pronunciation work with spelling work as the silent letter *p* in *psychologist* and the *ph* digraph in *pharmacist* were pointed out. Furthermore, the one-to-one correspondence between pronunciation and spelling in Czech (the students’ L1) was explained and therefore contrasted with the L2. With the letter *c*, the individual sound representations /ʃ/, /tʃ/ and /k/ (including useful examples of words) were listed with the sound representations and sample words partially elicited from students. Similar work was done with the letter *t*.

As a pre-listening activity, the students were asked to produce as many words related to the topic ‘drugs’ as possible. All the words were written down on the board by the teacher. The students showed great vocabulary but their pronunciation was often incorrect, yet, no pronunciation corrections other than occasional recasts were observed. Unfortunately, no words were transcribed into the IPA to show the correct pronunciation. It would have been useful to work with the words later through various kinds of activities. For instance, the teacher could have employed a running dictation including the use of IPA (Kelly 2000, 62).

Pronunciation errors were mostly ignored by the teacher, especially when the focus of the activity was on fluency rather than accuracy. Errors such as /kaf/ (*cow* /kaʊ/), /ban/ (*ban* /bæn/), /'percent/ (*percent* /pər'sent/), /advan'ta:ʒɪs/ (*advantages* /əd'væntɪdʒɪz/) were not

dealt with at all. Some errors were recasts with little emphasis on the correct form and no repetition from the student. It is, therefore, questionable how valuable the use of recasts was. For instance, the recast correction of the word *Titanic* proved to be completely unsuccessful as the students kept pronouncing it /tɪ'tænɪk/ even after several repetitions of the correct form from the teacher. The letter *x* was frequently pronounced as /ɪks/ and the teacher's recast did not affect the students. The same situation was repeated with the word *Xena* pronounced as /ksena/. When the correct pronunciation of the word *natural* pronounced by a student as /'neɪtʃərəl/ was pointed out, the student corrected herself based on the recast. This was the first time, a recast was noticed by a student and led to a self-correction. Occasionally, the pronunciation differed to such extent that the teacher (a native speaker of English) struggled to construct the meaning, for instance with the word *pirates* /'paɪrəts/ pronounced as /pɪ'reɪts/. The words with incorrect pronunciation, especially those hindering communication, could have been written on the board during the fluency activity. Later, the teacher could have transcribed them into IPA or asked the students to try to do that on their own. Similar work could have been done concerning word stress. A simple drilling activity could have also led to improved pronunciation.

#### **4.1.2 Teacher 2**

One of the activities was a vocabulary revision in which the teacher provided an oral definition of a word and the students were asked to produce the described word. At first, it required one-word answers but later shifted to entire-phrase responses such as *I find it fascinating to...*, therefore integrating several systems (grammar and lexis) with speaking skills. Pronunciation work, unfortunately, remained unnoticed even though pronunciation errors frequently occurred. For instance, the word *fascinating* was pronounced as /'fascɪneɪtɪŋ/ instead of /'fæsɪneɪtɪŋ/ by several students although the correct phonological had been previously provided by the teacher. This suggests that students may find it difficult to focus on speaking and choosing appropriate grammatical and phonological forms at the same time. Also, once the students become used to pronouncing a word incorrectly and hearing its incorrect phonological form over and over again, it is much more difficult to get rid of the habit. This particular word required explicit pronunciation information such as an IPA transcription on the board, a quick drilling exercise or at least an emphasized correction from the teacher while demanding repetition from the student.

The teacher stated they had worked on these words in the past, it is, therefore, possible that pronunciation work had been included in the past. More pronunciation work was, however, necessary.

In another activity, the students took turns reading an article about unusual places to stay. We would argue that reading out loud in the classroom is a rather problematic activity. Even though it interconnects spelling and pronunciation work, it can prove ineffective for various reasons. In his teaching manual, Scrivener explains that people read in different speeds, tend to lose attention when it is not their turn to read and find it unhelpful to listen to bad readers who frequently get stuck and make pronunciation errors (Scrivener 2011, 269-270). We believe that the goal (among others) of reading out loud should be to read the text as authentically as possible with attention not only on individual sounds but especially on suprasegmental features such as linking, word and sentence stress, and appropriate intonation. If flat reading is tolerated when reading out loud it might perhaps be more useful to let students read silently on their own and later discuss the read text. T2 focused mainly on vocabulary explanations but no attention was paid to pronunciation. The students struggled to read many of the words, therefore paying no attention to suprasegmental features.

In the case of T2, pronunciation error correction also occurred only sporadically. For instance, pronunciation errors such as /'prɪveɪt/ for *private*, /ədven'teɪdʒɪs/ for *advantages*, /ləʊərs/ for *lovers*, /'præmɪtɪv/ for *primitive*, were not dealt with at all even though they could easily hinder communication. Other errors such as /'feɪsɪlɪtɪ/ for *facility*, /'beɪzɪk/ for *basic*, /'peɪzənts/ for *peasants*, /'neɪtʃərəl/ for *natural*, /əlzəʊ/ for *also*, /'tɔːtʃər/ for *torture* were corrected with a recast, mostly without any acknowledgment of the error from the student. With the incorrect pronunciation of *Siberia* /'sɪberɪə/, the teacher let the student finish the speech and later announced the phonological focus by saying “Um, pronunciation, um, Siberia /sɪˈbɪəriə/” with the target word enunciated slowly. This was the only time a recast had been preceded by a verbal acknowledgment of dealing with an incorrect phonological form. The student recognized his error and repeated the correct form after the teacher. Another brief reference to pronunciation was done when



drawing links to another foreign language, French, particularly for words borrowed from French which often differ in their phonological form.

#### **4.1.3 Teacher 3**

T3 is the main examination teacher, whose main goal is to prepare the class for the First Certificate in English (FCE). This exam consists of tasks focusing on all four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing), as well as the systems (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, function as well discourse). Due to that, the observed lessons differed in character from the more general ones provided by the other teachers. It was also expected that pronunciation instruction would occur as part of the preparation for the FCE exam. Unfortunately, no pronunciation instruction was noticed during the lessons except for a few pronunciation error corrections.

The observed lessons included several listening activities taken from the FCE exam preparation material: a gap-listening and a matching activity. These listening tasks tended to occur at the end of the lessons with enough time just to listen to the recordings twice and quickly check the answers. No pre-listening or post-listening activities were planned along with the recordings with no focus on phonological aspects of the listening (which might have led to incorrect answers) whatsoever.

There are several reasons why listening activities can prove difficult for EFL students even if they are familiar with the topic, grammar and lexis of the recording. Native speakers often speak too fast to be easily followed by a native speaker, word boundaries are nonexistent, and words might be pronounced differently from what the student is used to hearing (Scrivener 2011, 249). Therefore, we believe that simply being exposed to oral language is not enough. Students need to become familiar with the concept of noticing; focusing on particular aspects of language and their use in the text (Kelly 2000, 22). Simple awareness of language forms can help students better understand the L2. To make them more useful, the listening activities presented by the teacher could have included a focus on aspects of connected speech which often complicates the understanding. The students could have been asked to write down instances of contracted forms, linking, intrusive sounds, elision or assimilation occurring in the recording. Also, some general

rules for these suprasegmental features could have been (with the help of the teacher) elicited from the students and frequent examples students are likely to encounter provided (Kelly 2000, 113).

#### **4.1.4 Teacher 4**

T4 is the only NNEST in our research. Besides, she shares the native language with her students. Being a NNEST should not be seen as a “pedagogical disadvantage but rather the opposite” (Braine 2010, cited in Burri 2015, 69). Even though we could argue that NESTs are better language models, NNESTs can be great learner models who guide their students through the same learning process they have once gone through as well (Murphy 2014, cited in Burri 2015, 69). Furthermore, a teacher who shares the mother tongue of the students can, of course, use this knowledge to their benefit (see section 2.2.8, Medgyes 2001). Furthermore, the position of a NNEST might be useful in a discussion on phonological differences across varieties and the students’ individual preferences regarding which variety of English they wish to copy. Again, the teacher can serve as a model who is ‘in the same boat’ with the students. Unfortunately, T4 committed many pronunciation errors herself and therefore cannot be considered an appropriate learner model regarding L2 pronunciation.

Several activities focused on the oral revision and practice of individual words and fixed phrases. Such type of activities can easily implement pronunciation focus on word stress and problematic phonemes as the students are not overwhelmed by grammatical form choices of more spontaneous speech. Some of the word stress errors included examples such as /'forget/ for *forget*, /'egzotik/ for *exotic* and /apriʃieɪnt/ for *appreciate*. Segmental errors included /'tsɪgarets/ for *cigarettes*, /'pɜːrzn/ for *person*, /'kokonʌt/ for *coconut* and /wʌx/ for *wax*. Most errors were not dealt with, the minority were corrected with a recast which has already proved unhelpful with the other teachers. Instead, a quick drilling exercise could have been implemented to deal with these phonological errors. Drill exercises allow the students to “practice ‘getting their mouths around’ the language” (Scrivener 2011, 169) in many different variations: as a whole class, individuals only, open pairs, loudly, quietly, whispering, with exaggerated intonation, with intonation for a particular mood, specific accent, etc. (Scrivener 2011, 172).

It was also noticed that the teacher praised virtually everything that more or less resembled the correct answer with the words “well done” and “perfect.” Frequently, the phonological form of the students’ answer was far from easily intelligible, let alone ‘perfect.’ We believe that the students would benefit more from receiving “precise, honest feedback rather than gushing praise” (Scrivener 2011, 170) because only with honest feedback can they become aware of their weaknesses and start the process towards their elimination.

## **4.2 Teacher survey**

Although the number of teachers observed and surveyed is low, the combination of observations and surveys provide us with enough data to draw conclusions regarding pronunciation teaching status and pronunciation teaching beliefs and attitudes. Since the observed lessons included, with some individual differences between the four teachers, very little pronunciation work, the main objective of the teacher survey will be to understand why this is the case; are the teachers unaware of the pronunciation role in TEFL or are they simply not motivated enough to focus on it in the classroom?

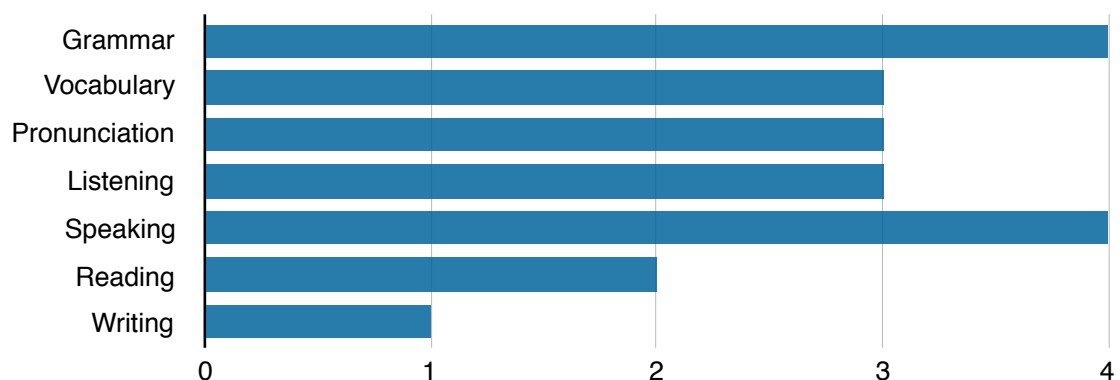
All four teachers belong to the category of middle-aged adults with various degrees of teaching experience and education in the area of TEFL. Three teachers are native speakers of English with a certification in teaching English, one is an uncertified native speaker of Czech. All teachers speak at least one more foreign language at a beginner or intermediate level; all of them share some knowledge of Spanish. None of them have a university degree related to teaching English. The teacher surveys will at first be analyzed as a group. Later, individual beliefs and attitudes will be compared with the observation data to see whether they are in agreement or whether there are some discrepancies.

### **4.2.1 Teachers’ beliefs and attitudes regarding pronunciation**

**Question 1: Which of the following areas do you consider to be essential for teaching English as a foreign language?**

As can be seen in Figure 4.1 all four teachers agree that grammar and speaking skills are essential in TEFL. Three teachers believe that vocabulary, pronunciation and listening is also essential while the importance of reading and writing skills is acknowledged by only two teachers and one teacher respectively. The research shows that systems and skills

taught and practiced in balance are most likely to lead to learning (Scrivener 2011, 318). Therefore, we would argue that all seven options should ideally be considered important by teachers. Only T1, however, chose to mark all seven options. T2 agrees with the importance of speaking but does not find listening skills essential for TEFL. This is rather unexpected as communication is a two-way process and receptive skills are of as much use as productive skills, although they might differ in the amount of vocabulary and grammar available. It is necessary that we look at all skills and systems as interconnected rather than teaching them in isolation, especially listening and speaking (Scrivener 2011, 26).

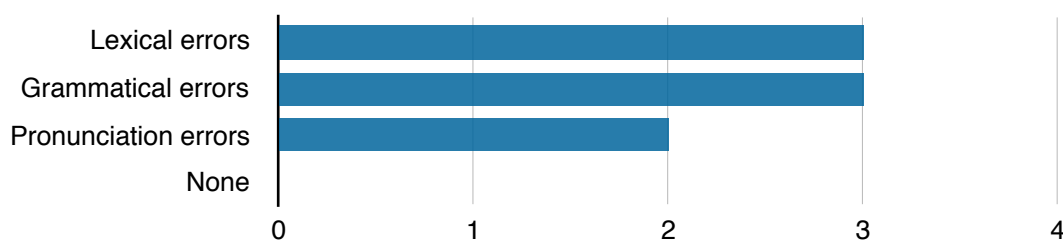


**Figure 4.1: Responses to Question 1 of the teacher survey**

Surprisingly, T3 acknowledged the role of grammar, pronunciation, listening and speaking without recognizing the importance of vocabulary. The knowledge of these is, however, of no value if one does not know any vocabulary in the target language since “there can be no speaking if you don’t have the vocabulary to speak with” (Scrivener 2011, 29). Furthermore, we could argue that the knowledge of vocabulary which is intelligible to the listener is enough to communicate to at least a certain degree without any employment of particular grammatical features. This technique is commonly used by beginner students struggling to express themselves in a foreign environment. T4 acknowledged the importance of all listed options except for reading and writing skills. Speaking and listening will likely be of greater use to an average learner of English, especially a beginner, yet some employment of writing and reading skills is still vital.

**Question 2: Which of the following errors committed by students do you generally correct during speaking activities?**

Figure 4.2 shows that pronunciation errors are corrected only by two teachers while lexical and grammatical errors are dealt with by three teachers. T1 and T3 claim to correct all three kinds of errors while T2 focuses on lexical errors and T4 on grammatical errors only. Pronunciation errors (similarly to other language errors) are essential for teachers in that they reflect the degree of learning and whether the target form has been internalized by the student or not. The teachers can then employ remedial pronunciation work to tackle these errors. Unfortunately, if pronunciation errors (and any other errors) are completely ignored in the classroom, the students are unlikely to notice them on their own, let alone eliminate them. Furthermore, the student survey data showed that the students would generally welcome more pronunciation error correction (see section 4.3.1 Question 11).

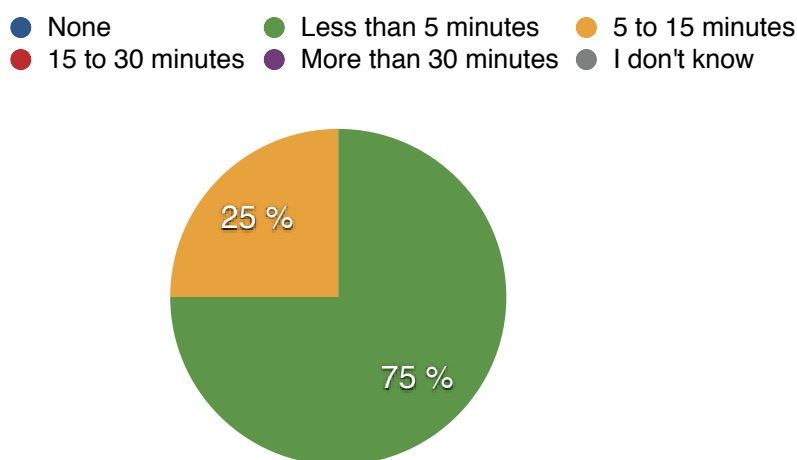


**Figure 4.2: Responses to Question 2 of the teacher survey**

**Question 3: How much time do you spend on teaching pronunciation and pronunciation activities including pronunciation error correction in a typical 90-minute lesson?**

As can be seen in Figure 4.3 three teachers believe they spend less than five minutes on pronunciation per 90-minute lesson while T1 spends between five to fifteen minutes on it. Although none of the teachers completely avoids pronunciation teaching and practicing, less than five minutes per lesson does not seem to be an adequate amount of time, especially if we believe that pronunciation should be integrated with other aspects of teaching such as grammar and vocabulary. Pronunciation is not only relevant for speaking and listening but also reading and writing due to the phoneme-grapheme correspondences. Kelly, for instance, claims that even though English has no one-to-one correspondence between spelling and pronunciation (there are 44 sounds in British English and only 26 letters), more than 80% of words in English are spelled according to regular patterns with less than 500 words being completely irregular in spelling. What we can do to help our

students is to introduce them to the rules and patterns by combining pronunciation and spelling work (Kelly 2000, 123).



**Figure 4.3: Responses to Question 3 of the teacher survey**

**Question 4: Which of the following pronunciation areas do you focus on with your students?**

Figure 4.4 displays that the *th* sounds are the most popular area of pronunciation covered by three teachers. Segmental pronunciation in the area of vowels, consonants and phonemes absent in Czech, and intonation are taught by two teachers only. Word stress, sentence stress, the strong and weak pronunciation of words, and linking is taught by only one teacher. Overall, segmental pronunciation is favored by the teachers, especially the *th* sounds which are not necessarily the most problematic area hindering communication with regards to the functional load (see section 2.4.2). Suprasegmentals tend to be omitted in most cases, even though they can be crucial for understanding. While T1 chose all options in this question, other teachers marked between one and three options only. It is therefore unlikely that the class receives enough instruction and practice regarding all areas of pronunciation throughout the course. This question regarding pronunciation areas covered in the classroom also appeared in the student survey (see section 4.3.1 Question 7). All areas were checked by at least one student, we may, therefore, conclude that the teacher and student data correspond.

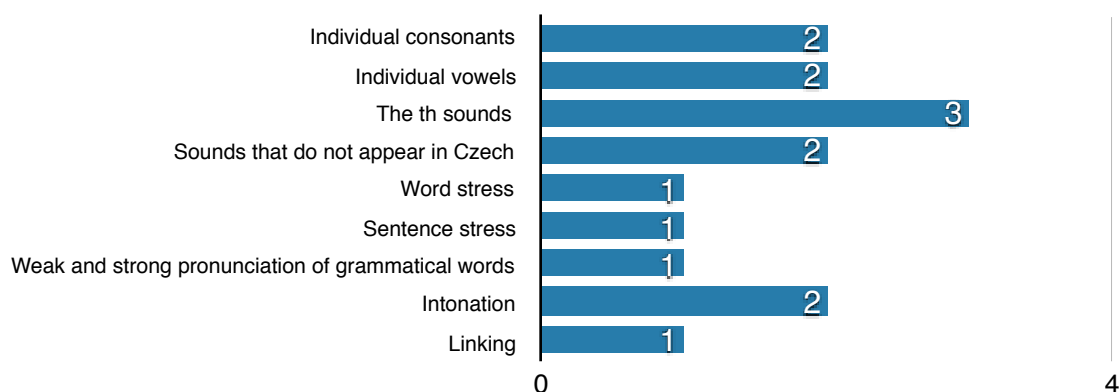


Figure 4.4: Responses to Question 4 of the teacher survey

**Question 5: Which of the following statements best describes your Pomat students?**

All teachers agreed that the majority of the class favors the Intelligibility Principle over the Nativeness Principle which corresponds to the data collected in the student survey (see section 5.3.1 Question 5).

- Most aspire to achieve native or native-like pronunciation
- Most would like to be understood by native and native speakers, even if they have a Czech accent
- Most want to keep their Czech accent when they speak English.

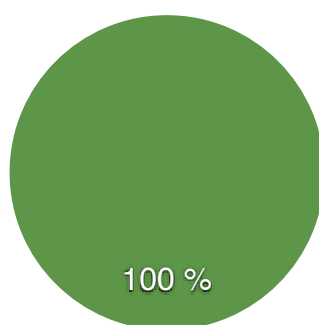


Figure 4.5: Responses to Question 5 of the teacher survey

**Question 6: Please rate how much you agree with the following statements on a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).**

The data is summarized in Figure 4.18 which has been converted to a Likert scale, in which 2 refers to strongly agree and -2 refers to strongly disagree. It is obvious from the figure that even though the teachers reached an agreement for a few of the statements, for others they showed very conflicting beliefs. All four teachers are aware that it is not only higher-level students who need pronunciation instruction and that even older students can improve in this aspect. They also agree that the goal of pronunciation instruction is improved intelligibility while as a group they are not sure whether pronunciation instruction should also help students sound as close to the native norm as possible. None of

them contradicted the positive effects of pronunciation on the students even though two teachers checked the neutral option. Also, none of them found it difficult to understand their students. This corresponds to the data provided by the majority of students who did not have problems communicating in English (see 5.3.1 Question 11).

Statement	T1	T2	T3	T4
Only higher level students need to be taught pronunciation.	-1	-1	-2	-2
Students improve faster when teachers add explicit information on pronunciation to speaking activities.	1	1	0	0
Most students eventually learn pronunciation naturally by being exposed to the language.	0	1	2	1
I feel competent to teach all aspects of pronunciation.	1	-2	2	-1
I sometimes struggle with teaching pronunciation.	-1	0	0	2
Only young students are able to improve their pronunciation.	-1	-1	-2	-1
Only native speakers should teach pronunciation.	-1	-1	1	-1
It is sometimes difficult to understand my students because of their pronunciation.	0	-1	0	0
There is usually no time to teach pronunciation as I have to focus on other aspects.	-2	1	1	0
Having a strong foreign accent means the speaker's intelligibility suffers and that the listener has to try hard to understand them.	0	0	1	2
It is superfluous to teach students metalanguage used to describe pronunciation (e.g. <i>stress</i> , <i>vowel</i> , <i>linking</i> , <i>syllable</i> ).	-1	0	1	1
Segmental (individual sounds) pronunciation errors cause more misunderstandings than suprasegmental (prosody) errors.	-1	0	1	0
I feel comfortable teaching individual sounds.	1	1	0	1
I feel comfortable teaching prosody (e.g. rhythm, intonation, sentence stress).	1	-1	1	-2
The goal of pronunciation instruction is to make students more intelligible.	1	1	1	2



Statement	T1	T2	T3	T4
The goal of pronunciation instruction is to make students sound as close to native speakers as possible.	1	-1	0	0

**Figure 4.6: Responses to Question 6 of the teacher survey**

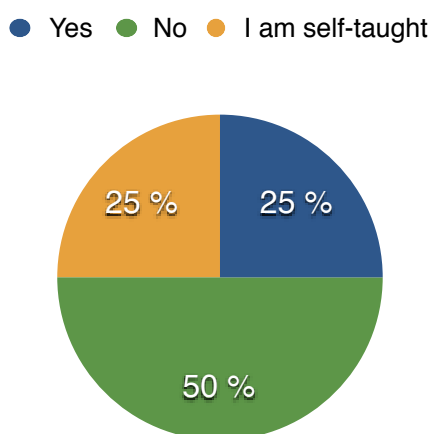
On the other hand, the majority of teachers believed that pronunciation is simply acquired naturally through the exposure of the target language. Only one teacher found metalanguage concerning pronunciation useful even though the examples of metalanguage provided in the question were very basic. The general belief that metalanguage is of no use to students contradicts with Couper's opinion that finding the right metalanguage to teach our students is one of the key parts of effective pronunciation instruction (Couper 2006, 59). The teachers also differed in their level of confidence regarding pronunciation instruction with two teachers feeling competent and two incompetent in providing all aspects of pronunciation. More specifically, the teachers were more confident teaching segmental pronunciation while suprasegmentals were found difficult to teach by two. As a group, they were not sure whether segmentals or suprasegmentals cause more communication problems. One teacher openly admitted they sometimes struggle with pronunciation instruction. Most teachers did not agree with the statement that only native speakers should teach pronunciation. Two teachers admit that they often have no time to teach pronunciation because they have to focus on other aspects. Again, this is a false assumption which sees pronunciation instruction as something provided only when there is time for it. It is, in fact, the contrary; pronunciation instruction should be planned and employed in relevance to the particular grammatical structures and lexis (Kelly 2000, 13). Fine knowledge of grammar and vocabulary is simply insufficient when the student struggles to understand others and being understood due to their pronunciation (Kelly 2000, 11). The teachers also seemed to believe that accentedness equals compromised intelligibility and comprehensibility which is not the case at all times.

To conclude, the teachers greatly differ when it comes to pronunciation instruction beliefs and readiness to incorporate pronunciation into the classroom work. Not all of the teachers were aware of the information concerning pronunciation instruction research available in the literature. Overall, they felt there were various constraints in pronunciation teaching

such as lack of time and competence, but also the belief that pronunciation is often acquired naturally without any explicit instruction. They also did not seem to be able to clearly distinguish the terms accentedness, intelligibility and comprehensibility. The most knowledgeable teacher regarding pronunciation proved to be T1 whose answers most corresponded to the data provided in the literature. This is quite surprising since T1 is the least experienced teacher of all (having less than a year of teaching experience). On the other hand, T1 is the only one to mention attending a 120 hour TEFL course which also included pronunciation instruction training.

**Question 7: Have you ever received any training involving teaching pronunciation?**

As can be seen in Figure 4.7, T1 was the only one to state that they received teaching pronunciation training as a part of the 120 Hour Advanced TEFL Course and marked its quality as average. T2 and T3 stated having no experience with pronunciation teaching training even though they both also have a certification related to teaching English. Unfortunately, this might suggest that pronunciation teaching tends to be omitted from general teacher training programs or occurs to such a low degree that the participants do not even acknowledge its presence. Finally, T4 who has no certification in teaching English claimed to be self-taught in the area of pronunciation teaching.



**Figure 4.7: Responses to Question 7 of the teacher survey**

### **4.3 Student survey**

The student respondents form a homogenous group in terms of their mother tongue, age group and relative English proficiency. All thirteen students, ten females and three males, are native speakers of Czech between the age of 19 and 21 attending a high intermediate

English course for the period of two semesters. The students vary in the number of languages spoken. Three state that they do not speak any other foreign languages apart from English, seven speak another foreign language as well (six students listed German, one student French) and three female students speak two more languages (a combination of Spanish, French or German).

### 4.3.1 Students' beliefs and attitudes regarding pronunciation

#### Question 1: Which of the following areas are important for learning English?

Figure 4.9 shows that pronunciation is the least frequently seen as important with only two students acknowledging its importance, even though 12 out of 13 students believe vocabulary and speaking are essential components of learning English. Grammar, listening and reading skills are also perceived as important by the majority of students. This result demonstrates that students are generally unaware of the significance of balance between individual systems and skills in learning a foreign language (Scrivener 2011, 318). Furthermore, the students tend to look at pronunciation as a separate area of learning virtually unrelated to grammar, vocabulary, speaking and listening since all these were marked as important by the majority. This might be the result of the teachers' tendency to completely neglect pronunciation work in the classroom or teach it on its own without any integration to the currently studied vocabulary and grammar.

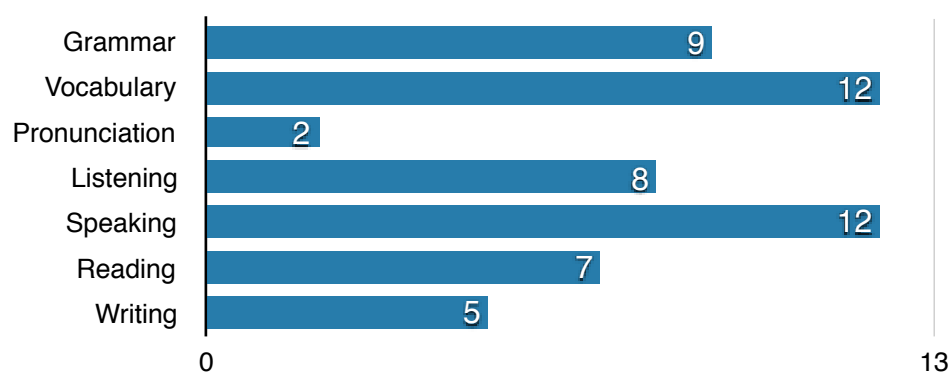
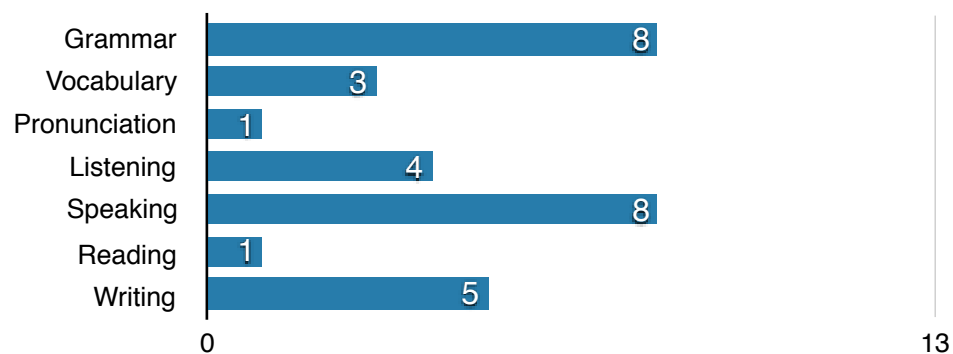


Figure 4.8: Responses to Question 1 of the student survey

#### Question 2: Which of the following areas would you like to spend more time on?

As can be seen in Figure 4.9, only one student showed interest in more pronunciation-related activities while the majority wished to spend more time on grammar and speaking. The fact that almost none of the students would appreciate more focus on pronunciation

might suggest two situations: the students either believe that pronunciation does not need to be practiced as it is a phenomenon acquired naturally during other skill or system-related activities or they feel enough pronunciation guidance is already received from their teachers. The latter is unfortunately unlikely if we consider the other responses of both the teachers and students.



**Figure 4.9: Responses to Question 2 of the student survey**

**Question 3: Can you rate our quality of teaching regarding the following aspects on a scale from 1 (excellent) to 5 (very poor)?**

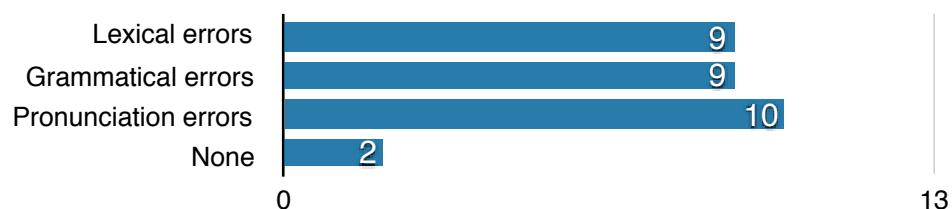
Although Figure 4.10 does not display large differences in the evaluation across individual systems and skills, the pronunciation (together with the writing skills) received the lowest score of all with the average mark of 2.5. The highest score (1.7) was given to speaking skills, followed shortly by vocabulary and reading skills. The third-lowest score (2.2) was given to listening skills. The relatively low score in both listening skills and pronunciation might be interconnected. Students can have sufficient knowledge in terms of vocabulary and grammar which tends to be the focus of most lessons, yet fail listening activities due to their inability to perceive the spoken word (Kelly 2000, 11). If their attention is not explicitly drawn to problematic phonemes, blurred word boundaries, linking and other aspects of connected speech as well as different pronunciation varieties across Englishes, the students are not likely to improve their receptive skills, especially if there is also no work on productive skills.

Area	Average mark (rounded to one decimal number)
Grammar	2
Vocabulary	1.8
Pronunciation	2.5
Listening	2.2
Speaking	1.7
Reading	1.9
Writing	2.5

**Figure 4.10: Responses to Question 3 of the student survey**

**Question 4: Which of the following mistakes do your teachers correct during speaking activities?**

Much to our surprise, the most corrected type of errors according to the students is pronunciation errors voted by 10 students even though it is closely followed by lexical and grammatical errors both voted by nine students. Two students listed that no errors are corrected by their teachers. This data visualized in Figure 4.11 does not exactly correspond to the information provided by the teachers since only two teachers claim to correct all three kinds of errors while the other two correct grammatical and lexical errors in one case and grammatical errors only in the other case. Furthermore, pronunciation error correction was virtually nonexistent in the observed lessons.



**Figure 4.11: Responses to Question 4 of the student survey**

**Question 5: When was the last time your class learned or practiced pronunciation?**

More than half of the students could not remember the last time pronunciation was taught or practiced in the classroom while three students stated it was that week and three other students believed it was the week before the survey completion. As can be seen in Figure 4.12, none of the students chose the option “never” therefore all of them believe some pronunciation work is done in the classroom, even though they do not agree or cannot even remember the last time. The individual differences might be caused by the students’ lack of attention and absence in class.

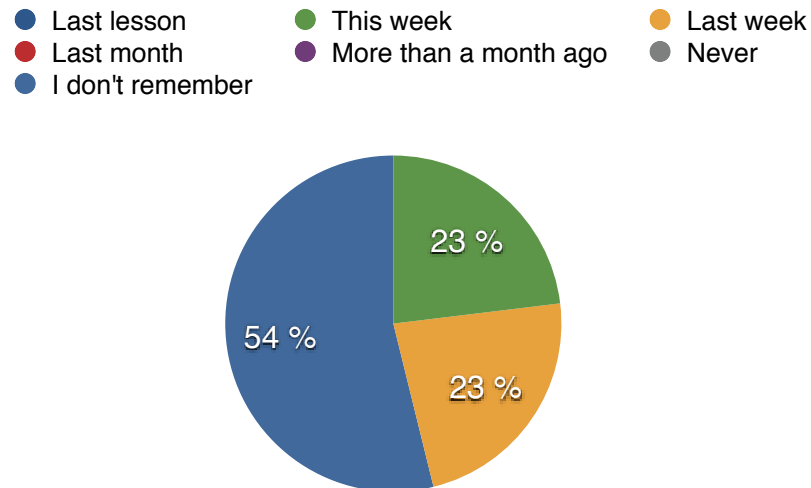


Figure 4.12: Responses to Question 5 of the student survey

**Question 6: How much time do you spend on pronunciation learning and practicing including pronunciation error correction in a typical 90-minute lesson?**

Figure 4.13 displays the students do not generally agree on the amount of time spent on pronunciation per lesson. 38% (five students) believe they spend less than five minutes dealing with pronunciation, another 38% claim it is five to fifteen minutes per lesson while one student even believes it is between fifteen and thirty minutes. Two students chose the “I don’t know” answer. If we compare these answers with the data provided by the teachers we see that the students are much more generous in the amount pronunciation work while the majority of teachers claims to spend less than five minutes on pronunciation work (three teachers) with one teacher claiming it is between five to fifteen minutes per lesson. The student data could again be affected by their lack of attention paid to particular aspects of lessons or frequent absenteeism.

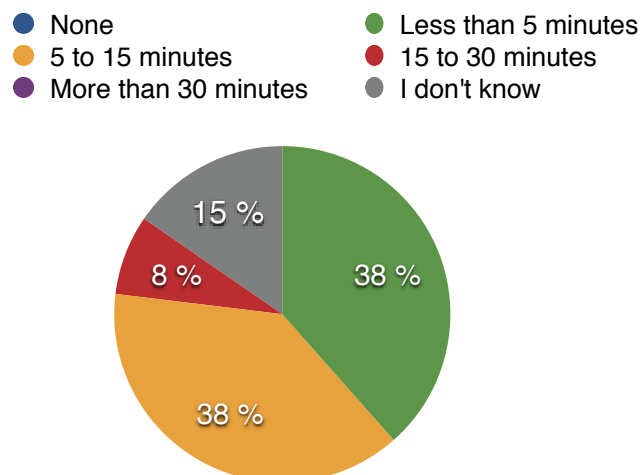
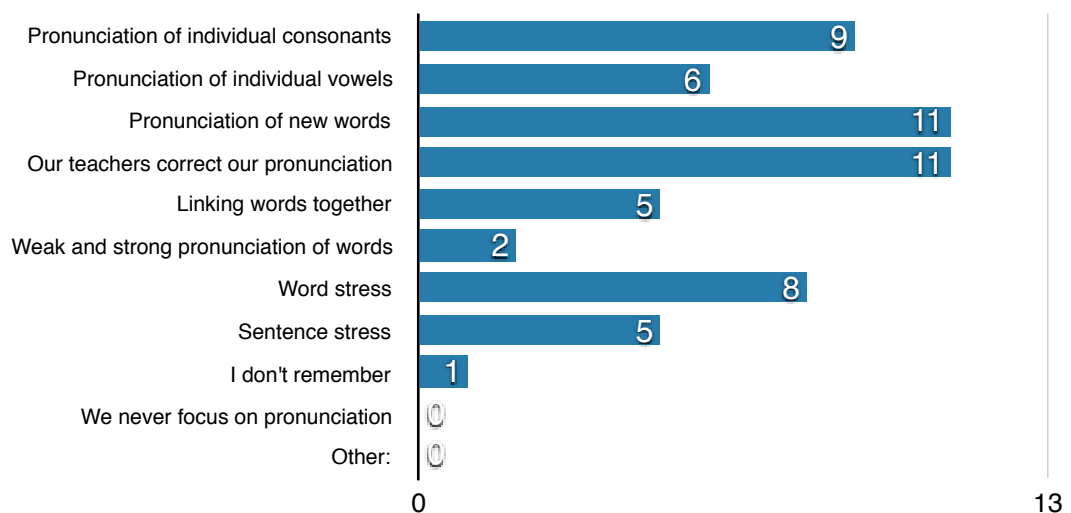


Figure 4.13: Responses to Question 6 of the student survey

**Question 7: What areas of pronunciation did you learn about or practice in the classroom?**

The majority of students agree that some classroom time is spent on the pronunciation of consonants, less than half of the students also believe that some work is being done on the remaining segments; vowels. 85% (11 students) claim their pronunciation is corrected and that the pronunciation of new words is also covered in the classroom. The suprasegmental feature of word stress was checked off by 8 students. The minority of students also marked other suprasegmental features, specifically sentence stress and linking. None of the students chose the ‘We never focus on pronunciation’ option or filled out the option ‘Other.’ Interestingly, one student specified the ‘Our teachers correct our pronunciation mistakes’ option by adding the word sometimes to it. Later in the survey, the same student identified that only one out of five teachers provides any kind of pronunciation teaching and practice. Another student was able to identify five areas of pronunciation studied in the classroom, yet also marked the ‘I don’t remember’ option suggesting they are aware of the probability of other areas covered as well. The data collected for this question is summarized in Figure 4.14.



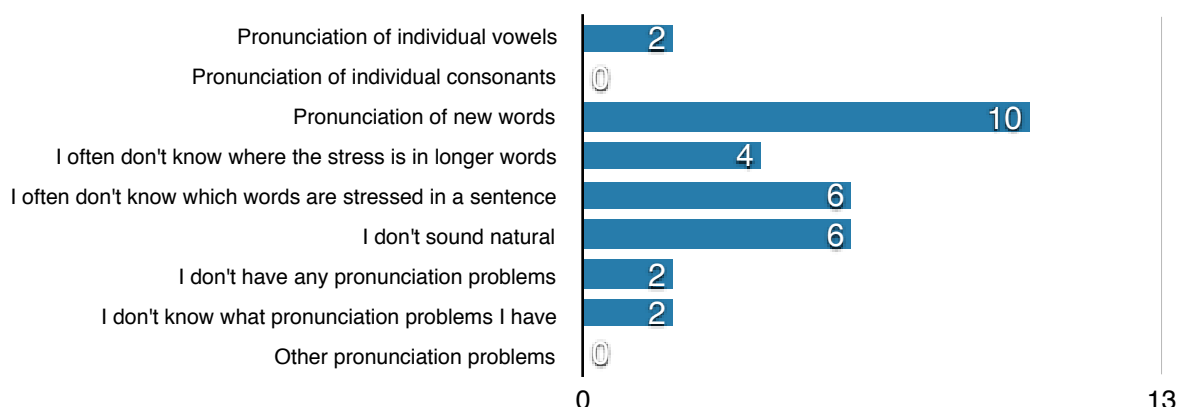
**Figure 4.14: Responses to Question 7 of the student survey**

**Question 8: What are some of your common pronunciation problems?**

As a whole, suprasegmental features seemed to be more problematic for students than segmental features as can be seen in Figure 4.15 below. 77% (10 students) found it difficult to pronounce new words, 46% (six students) were concerned about sentence stress and naturalness of their speech, 31% (four students) identified word stress difficulties. Only two students mention segmental issues, specifically vowels, while none of them are aware

of having difficulties with consonants. One student simply believed that they did not have any pronunciation problems as this was the only checked option, another student was less sure as they also checked the ‘I don’t know’ option. None of the students listed pronunciation problems other than the ones provided in the question.

This subjective analysis of pronunciation problems is unlikely to be very realistic. The English phonemic inventory does not correspond to the Czech phonemic inventory. There are several problematic sounds which cause difficulties for Czech students, both vowel and consonant sounds. As a result, many English minimal pairs sound identical to an untrained Czech ear. Czech speakers’ intonation is also perceived as very flat by native speakers of English since the role of intonation in Czech is of lower importance. It is also interesting that the students checked all options containing suprasegmental features even though suprasegmental pronunciation tends to be omitted to even a greater extent than segmental pronunciation. This hypothesis was confirmed in the teacher survey (see 4.2.1 Question 4).



**Figure 4.15: Responses to Question 8 of the student survey**

#### **Question 9: How do you know about your pronunciation problems?**

More than half of the students are self-aware of their pronunciation problems and two students listed that they do not know about having any difficulties in this area. Five students claim to be informed about their pronunciation errors by their teachers and one student received such information from somebody other than a teacher. The data is summarized in Figure 4.16.



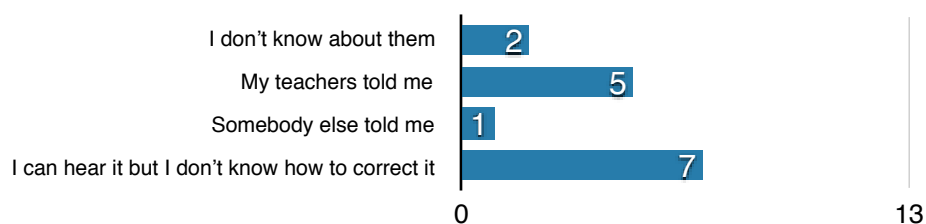


Figure 4.16: Responses to Question 9 of the student survey

**Question 10: How many of your teachers include pronunciation teaching and practice in their lessons?**

To understand this question, it is necessary to remind the reader that the author of the thesis also teaches the observed group of students but was excluded from the observation for obvious reasons of credibility. The students, unfortunately, do not seem to reach any consensus regarding the number of teachers focusing on pronunciation work as their answers cover the scale between all five teachers to one teacher only. The highest number of students (five) believe that all five teachers contribute to pronunciation teaching and practice, four students are only aware of two teachers including such work and three students believe it is three teachers. Only one student thinks pronunciation is covered by one teacher only. The data can be seen in Figure 4.17.

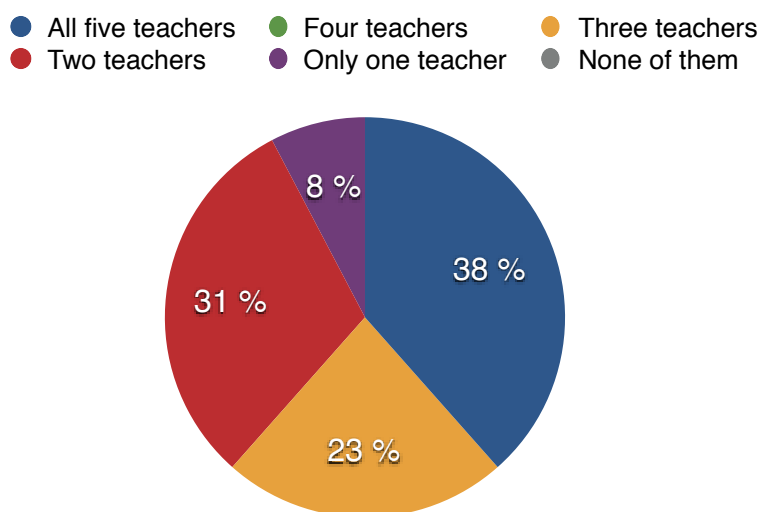


Figure 4.17: Responses to Question 10 of the student survey

**Question 11: Please rate how much you agree with the following statements on a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).**

The students seem to have quite different opinions when it comes to the statements about their English pronunciation and pronunciation instruction in the classroom. None of the 13 students stated that they wanted to learn pronunciation exclusively with native speakers of English even though 46% (sic students) chose the neutral option. Furthermore, 31% (four students) agreed that native speakers could even be better pronunciation teachers than

native speakers while 23% (three students) claimed the opposite. 46% wished their teachers spent more time on pronunciation (while the rest felt neutral about it) and 69% (nine students) would appreciate more pronunciation error correction. 61% also agree that learning more pronunciation rules would help them improve while the rest of the students feels neutral about it. Only 23% feel embarrassed during pronunciation practice activities which is also a very positive discovery. 92% (12 students) wished their pronunciation were better and 77% (10 students) felt that they would be respected more if they sounded native-like even though none of them explicitly stated being discriminated against for their foreign accent. 38% (five students) believe that simply communicating with native speakers will help them improve their English. Not many students seemed to experience serious communication breakdowns when speaking English; only 23% agreed it is sometimes difficult for other people to understand them and 31% admitted having to repeat themselves occasionally. The data is summarized in Figure 4.18 which has been converted to a Likert scale, in which 2 refers to strongly agree and -2 refers to strongly disagree. In two instances, S2 and S13 did not choose one of the answers on the scale; these are marked as N/A (not available) in Figure 4.18. The last column of the figure shows the average mark rounded to one decimal number.

To conclude, the majority of students are interested in improving their pronunciation and associate native-like pronunciation with increased respect from others. They are also generally aware of the positive effects of pronunciation instruction, whether provided by a native or native speaker. They are not against their teachers spending more time on pronunciation and many explicitly expressed the wish to have their pronunciation corrected more often.

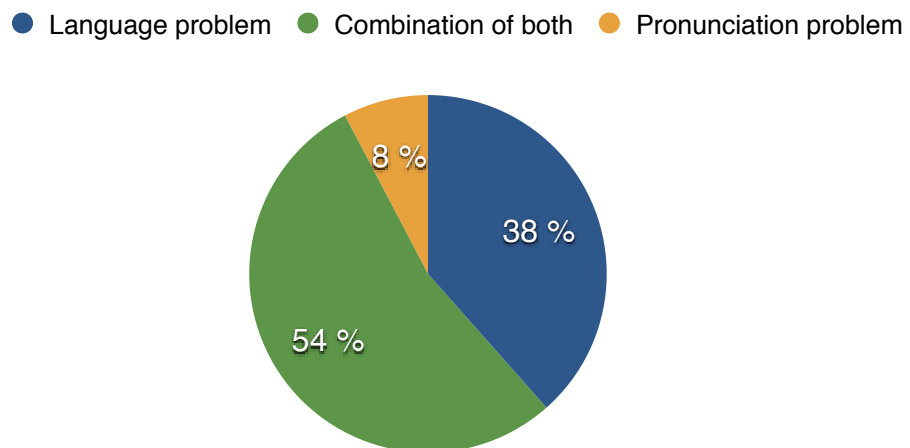
Statement	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	S13	Average
It is sometimes difficult for people to understand me when I speak English.	1	0	1	0	-1	0	0	-2	0	-1	-1	-1	1	-0.2
I am sometimes asked to repeat myself when I speak English.	-1	1	1	0	-1	0	1	-1	0	-1	0	-1	1	-0.1
I wish my teachers focused on pronunciation more.	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0.5
I am sometimes discriminated against because of my foreign accent.	-1	N/A	0	0	-1	-2	-2	-2	-1	-1	-2	0	-1	-1.1

Statement	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	S13	Average
I wish I had better pronunciation when I speak English.	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	1.3
Other people will respect me if I sound more like a native speaker of English.	-1	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	0.8
I only need to communicate with native speakers to improve my English.	-1	0	-1	1	-2	1	0	2	-1	0	0	1	2	0.2
Learning more pronunciation rules would help me improve my pronunciation.	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0.8
I feel embarrassed when we practice pronunciation.	1	0	-2	0	0	2	-1	-2	1	-1	-2	-2	0	-0.5
I only want to learn pronunciation with native speakers.	-1	-1	-2	0	0	0	-1	0	-1	0	-1	0	N/A	-0.6
Native speakers can sometimes be better at teaching pronunciation than native speakers.	0	0	1	1	1	0	-1	-2	1	0	0	0	-1	0
I wish my teachers corrected my pronunciation more than they do.	1	1	1	1	0	2	1	2	1	-1	-1	0	1	0.7

**Figure 4.18: Responses to Question 11 of the student survey**

**Question 12: When you have problems communicating in English, is it probably because of a language problem or a pronunciation problem, or a combination of both?**

More than the half of the students (seven) believe their communication problems stem from difficulties concerning both the language and pronunciation, five students chose the language problem as the main issue and only 1 student believes their communication problems are generally pronunciation-related. The relatively high number of students recognizing the role of pronunciation shows that the majority of students are either aware of their limited skills regarding pronunciation, or that they understand how crucial pronunciation is in oral communication. The data is summarized in Figure 4.19.

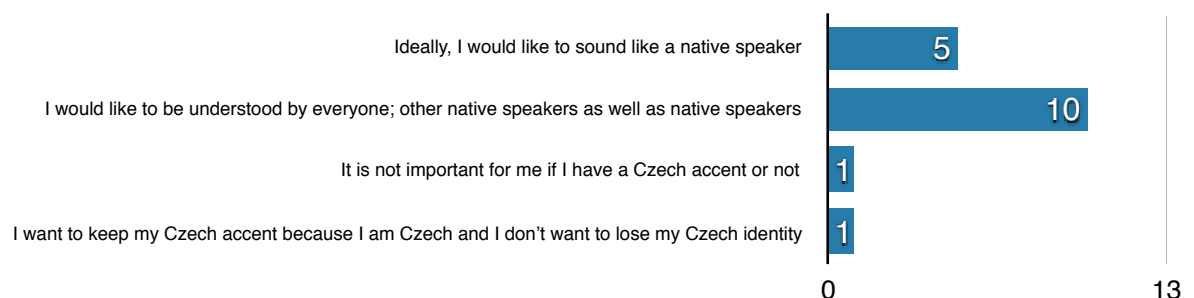


**Figure 4.19: Responses to Question 12 of the student survey**

**Question 13: What are your goals regarding pronunciation?**

For more than half of the students (seven) it would be enough to be understood by everyone without reaching a native level of pronunciation. Three other students would also like to be understood by everyone but ideally speak like a native speaker as they checked both options. 2 students aspire to sound native-like and 1 student could not decide between purposefully keeping their Czech accent and whether they had a Czech accent or not. Clearly, national identity does not play an important role in speaking a foreign language for young adults in the Czech Republic. Instead, the students seem to prefer the Intelligibility Principle and are aware of the lingua franca status of the English language. The data is displayed in Figure 4.20.

Arguably, the five students that would like to sound like native speakers might be more aware of the privileges of the native speaker status or are simply motivated to achieve the highest possible level of pronunciation in their L2. It is crucial to identify that none of these students felt discriminated for their foreign accent but tended to agree that a native speaker label would earn them more respect. Surprisingly, these students did not reach any consensus regarding the wish to be corrected more by their teachers and whether they only wanted to be taught pronunciation by a native speaker. The students should, of course, be encouraged by their teachers to reach the best possible level of English (including pronunciation), yet it is necessary that they be informed about the likelihood of reaching native-like pronunciation.



**Figure 4.20: Responses to Question 13 of the student survey**

#### **4.4 General discussion**

Through the analysis of data received in the classroom observations and teacher and student surveys, we were able to answer the six research hypotheses and the six specific questions assigned at the beginning of the empirical part of the thesis. All six hypotheses regarding pronunciation instruction were confirmed. Pronunciation instruction was virtually nonexistent in the classroom observations except for T1 who included an interesting pronunciation-spelling activity with some explicit information on segmental features. No suprasegmental instruction took place during the observations except for a brief note on more energetic intonation provided by T1. Furthermore, the only pronunciation error correction technique employed by the teachers was a recast which proved to be ineffective in almost all cases. It is unfortunate that less than five minutes is generally spent on pronunciation instruction per 90-minute lesson with only one teacher spending between five and fifteen minutes on it, especially when the teachers are aware of the importance of pronunciation for L2 acquisition and the students wish to improve their pronunciation and have their pronunciation corrected to a greater extent. Finally, there is a discrepancy not only between the research in pronunciation instruction and its actual employment in the classroom but also between what is already known about pronunciation instruction and what the teachers falsely believe.

The teacher survey showed the teachers' preference to teach segmental rather than suprasegmental features, this was, however, not per the observation data which showed no pronunciation instruction except for occasional recasts in three out of four teachers. Similarly, typical Czech pronunciation errors did not seem to be considered during the instruction except for T1 who included the brief remark on intonation which tends to be flat in Czech speakers. The teachers' and students' responses occasionally did not match, for instance concerning the amount of time spent on pronunciation and whether pronunciation errors tend to be corrected or not. On the other hand, the teachers and the students shared their preference for the Intelligibility Principle over the Nativeness Principle, even though some students aspired to achieve a native-like pronunciation if possible. Generally, all aspects of pronunciation were highly neglected for various reasons checked by the teachers: one teacher did not see pronunciation as essential in TEFL, two teachers felt incompetent to teach pronunciation, three teachers believed pronunciation is acquired naturally without the

need for explicit information and two teachers felt they did not have time to teach pronunciation.

Many of the activities presented by the teachers had great potential to incorporate pronunciation instruction and practice (both perceptual and productive). Unfortunately, the potential remained unfulfilled on most occasions. There was, however, one teacher (T1) who seemed to be fairly knowledgeable regarding pronunciation instruction and whose lessons were of slightly higher quality with respect to this area. The survey answers provided by T1, even though a novice teacher, were mostly in accordance with the information provided in the literature available to us. His knowledge was also reflected in his teaching which contained some explicit information on pronunciation and spelling of useful words. He was also the only teacher who included planned pronunciation instruction rather than remedial work due to pronunciation errors.

## **5 Conclusion**

Even though we are aware of the limitations of the small number of teaching participants and the length of the observations, the collected data is in accordance with the studied literature and we can, therefore, confirm that pronunciation instruction is indeed a highly neglected area of TEFL in the environment of a private Czech language school. To improve the current situation of pronunciation pedagogy, many changes will have to take place. It is essential that we not only focus on the students and teachers but that the problem is seen on a more global level.

Burri (2015) explains that in the past few decades, there has been a boom in the literature of second language teacher education (SLTE) and cognition (SLTC). Many studies have focused on the understanding of areas such as grammar, reading and writing, yet the cognition of pronunciation pedagogy is still lagging (Baker and Murphy 2011, cited in Burri 2015, 68). Even less research then focuses on the area of NNESTs' cognition of pronunciation pedagogy, which is shocking considering that approximately 80% of English teachers speak a different L1 (Braine 2010, cited in Burri 2015, 68). It is crucial that more attention is paid to the pronunciation pedagogy in literature and that L2 teachers become more knowledgeable about how pronunciation is acquired and how the English sound system works. Without such knowledge, we cannot expect them to provide effective pronunciation instruction (Murphy 2014, cited in Burri 2015, 69). Burri conducted a study in which he proved that the teacher cognition of pronunciation subject can greatly develop during a specifically designed postgraduate course. The participants increased their awareness of pronunciation, their understanding of the role of segmentals and suprasegmentals and the need for a balanced pronunciation syllabus (Burri 2015, 73-74).

Unfortunately, such courses are not widely available for English teachers. Many certificates and degree programs offer very limited focus on pronunciation teaching (Foote, Holby & Derwing 2011, cited in Murphy 2018, 301). In teacher preparation programs, phonetics and phonology are only discussed as part of a broader area of linguistics (Burgess & Spencer 2000, cited in Murphy 2018, 301). This results in teachers' incompetence and reluctance to provide pronunciation instruction (MacDonald 2002, cited

in Murphy 2018, 301) which then leads to the limited acquisition of the English sound system by the students.

The diploma thesis has shown that pronunciation instruction is a rather problematic area with many individual problems which require large-scale transformation. Therefore, future research could focus on ways of promoting pronunciation instruction in literature, university programs and TEFL certificates as well as motivating educational institutions to pay more attention to pronunciation pedagogy.



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## 7 Resumé

Předkládaná diplomová práce se zabývá výukou výslovnosti ve výuce angličtiny jako cizího jazyka. Z literatury vyplývá, že explicitní výuka výslovnosti by měla být nezbytnou součástí studia cizího jazyka, i přesto je však často opomíjena. Učitelé nejsou dostatečně kvalifikováni k tomu, aby byli schopni učit důležité aspekty výslovnosti, a nemají k dispozici vhodné materiály, které by jim výuku usnadnily. Chybí jim jak teoretické tak praktické znalosti, a svůj nezáměr o výuku výslovnosti často argumentují nedostatkem času a motivace. Většina z nich si však uvědomuje důležitost správné výslovnosti v cizím jazyce a důsledky, které hrozí v případě její absence.

Cílem této práce bylo zjistit, jak vypadá současná situace ve výuce výslovnosti v prostředí české soukromé jazykové školy. Práce je rozdělena do pěti kapitol. V úvodní kapitole je vymezena problematika výslovnosti a její výuky v rámci cizího jazyka. V teoretické kapitole je pak čtenář seznámen se základními pojmy týkajícími se výslovnosti, její výuky a efektivity. Na jejím konci je pak nastíněna představa současné situace ve výuce výslovnosti a nejčastější výslovnostní problémy české angličtiny. Následující metodologická kapitola popisuje metodologii praktické části, která je založena na observacích a učitelských a studentských dotaznících. Praktická část je rozdělena na dvě části: analýzu dat získaných dvoutýdenními observacemi a analýzu dotazníků, které vyplnili observovaní učitelé a studenti. Z důvodu téměř nulového zapojení výslovnosti do výuky jsme se dále rozhodli nastínit možné zapojení výslovnosti do observovaných hodin při zachování charakteru jednotlivých aktivit. Výsledky observací a dotazníků a jejich dopady jsou shrnuty v poslední páté kapitole.

Teoretická část práce se opírá o studie a výzkumy v oblasti výslovnosti, a to zejména ve výuce angličtiny jako cizího jazyka. Důležitým zdrojem teoretických informací o výslovnosti a její výuce pro nás bylo dílo *Pronunciation Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching* (2014, editorka Linda Grantová) a množství článků zaměřujících se na konkrétní aspekty výuky, např. G. Couper (2003, 2006), T. M. Derwing a spol. (1998, 2005, 2006) a další. Pro představení problematiky rodilých a nerodilých učitelů cizího jazyka jsme čerpali z článku P. Medgyese (2001) "When the teacher is a non-native speaker" a pro představení typických výslovnostních znaků české

angličtiny článek od R. Skarnitzla a J. Rumlové “Phonetic aspects of strongly-accented Czech speakers of English.”

V metodické části je čtenář podrobně seznámen s účastníky výzkumu a materiálem. Na základě prostudované literatury je představeno šest tezí, které jsou v následující kapitole potvrzeny či vyvráceny. Jednotlivé teze předpokládají, že výuka výslovnosti se v hodinách téměř neobjeví a pokud ano, bude se pravděpodobně zabývat segmentálními spíše než suprasegmentálními jevy. Na základě studií dále očekáváme, že si učitelé jsou vědomi důležitosti výuky výslovnosti, kterou by ve zvýšené míře uvítali i studenti, kteří nemají jasný přehled o tom, jakých výslovnostních chyb se dopouštějí. Poslední teze představuje rozpor mezi informacemi vyplývajícími ze studií a reálnou výukou výslovnosti v rámci hodin angličtiny jako cizího jazyka. Dále bylo položeno šest konkrétních otázek, kterými se též zabýváme v praktické části. Zajímala nás průměrná doba strávená výukou výslovnosti v 90-minutové lekci a konkrétní výslovnostní jevy, které se probírají nebo naopak ignorují. Zjišťovali jsme též důvody, pro které učitelé výslovnost do výuky nezařazují, zda preferují srozumitelnou výslovnost či výslovnost podobající se rodilému mluvčímu, a zda jsou typické výslovnostní problémy českých studentů brány v potaz. Na závěr jsme se ptali, zda data získaná observacemi odpovídají odpovědím studentů a učitelů v dotaznících.

Praktická část práce potvrdila všech šest tezí. Výuka výslovnosti se v observovaných hodinách objevila opravdu jen sporadicky, a to nejčastěji jako oprava výslovnostních chyb studentů při komunikativních aktivitách. Je nutné podotknout, že jediná zaznamenaná technika oprav výslovnostních chyb byl takzvaný *recast* neboli zopakování fráze či slova se správnou výslovností. Tento způsob se ukázal být naprosto nevhodným, jelikož ho studenti ve většině případů vůbec nezaznamenali, nemohl tedy vést k upevnění správné výslovnosti. Pouze jeden ze čtyř učitelů (T1) do své výuky zařadil aktivitu, která se soustředila na výslovnost a poskytl explicitní informace vedoucí k porozumění vztahu mezi výslovností a pravopisem anglického jazyka. Výuka suprasegmentálních jevů se v observovaných hodinách neobjevila, v rámci procvičování slovní zásoby však jeden z učitelů (T1) naznačil práci s intonací. Tři ze čtyř učitelů považují výslovnost za důležitou součást výuky, pouze dva z nich tvrdí, že opravují výslovnostní chyby a že explicitní výuka

výslovnosti napomáhá zlepšení výslovnosti. 61% studentů souhlasí s tvrzením o pozitivním vlivu explicitní výuky na jejich výslovnost, 92% touží po lepší výslovnosti, 46% by uvítalo více času stráveného výukou výslovnosti a 69% si přeje, aby byly častěji opravovány jejich výslovnostní chyby. Přestože studenti zaškrtnuli množství výslovnostních chyb, kterých se podle nich dopouštějí, nepředpokládáme, že by si studenti byli vědomi rozsahu a množství těchto chyb. Dva studenti například uvedli, že se nedopouští žádných ze zmíněných chyb, nikdo ze třinácti studentů neuvedl chyby ve výslovnosti souhlásek, a pouze čtyři studenti tvrdí, že jim činí problém slovní přízvuk. Tato tvrzení jsou vzhledem ke studiím zabývajícím se výslovností české angličtiny naprosto nereálná a pouze poukazují na nevědomost ze strany studentů způsobenou nedostatečnou informovaností. Všechna tato zjištění samozřejmě potvrzují naši domněnku, že praktická výuka výslovnosti neodpovídá teoretickým znalostem, které již o výslovnosti máme k dispozici.

Z učitelských dotazníků vyplývá, že observovaní učitelé tráví výukou výslovnosti méně než pět minut v 90-minutové lekci s výjimkou jednoho učitele (T1), který uvedl pět až patnáct minut. Tři z učitelů dále uvedli, že se zabývají *th* zvuky, možná proto, že jsou i pro laickou veřejnost známou oblastí způsobující výslovnostní problémy. Dva učitelé tráví čas jednotlivými samohláskami a souhláskami, intonací a zvuky, které se neobjevují v češtině. Pouze jeden z učitelů uvedl, že se zaměřuje na slovní a větný přízvuk, plnou a zkrácenou výslovnost gramatických slov a vázání, které jsou pro srozumitelnost poměrně klíčové. Tyto odpovědi však nekorespondují s daty získanými observacemi. Kromě již zmíněné aktivity zaměřené na vztah ortografie a opravy chyb technikou *recast* se žádné ze zmiňovaných oblastí v hodinách neobjevily. Není možné vyvrátit, že výslovnost je čas od času zahrnuta do výuky, rozhodně však nemůžeme mluvit o soustavné a plánované výuce výslovnosti. Důvodů, které učitelům brání ve výuce výslovnosti, je několik: nedostatek znalostí a potíže při výuce výslovnosti, nedostatek času v hodinách a zkreslené informace o tom, jak přínosná je pro studenty explicitní výuka výslovnosti, a znalost metajazyka. Učitelé se též cítí být nejistí ve výuce suprasegmentálních jevů oproti jevům segmentálním. Příjemným zjištěním je pro nás preference srozumitelné výslovnosti oproti výslovnosti podobající se rodilé, a to jak ze strany učitelů, tak i většiny studentů.

V závěrečné kapitole dochází ke shrnutí analýzy sesbíraných dat, která jsou porovnána s daty uvedenými v literatuře. Náš výzkum potvrzuje, že výuka výslovnosti představuje velmi zanedbanou oblast, která vyžaduje mnoho změn. Učitelé nejsou dostatečně kvalifikováni, chybí jim znalosti i praxe ve výuce výslovnosti, a v neposlední řadě i motivace a podpora ze strany vzdělávacích institucí.

## 8 Appendix

### Appendix 1 Teacher Survey

*Dear Swallow teacher,*

*I would like to ask you to complete this survey which is another part of my MA thesis conducted at Charles University, Faculty of Arts, Department of English Language and ELT Methodology. The contents of this form are absolutely confidential and information identifying the respondent will not be disclosed under any circumstances. Please be honest when answering the questions, otherwise, the research cannot be successful.*

*Your cooperation is much appreciated.*

#### Teaching style

Which of the following areas do you consider to be essential for teaching English as a foreign language?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> grammar          | <input type="checkbox"/> speaking skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> vocabulary       | <input type="checkbox"/> reading skills  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pronunciation    | <input type="checkbox"/> writing skills  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> listening skills |  |

Which of the following errors committed by students do you generally correct during speaking activities?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> lexical errors     | <input type="checkbox"/> pronunciation errors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> grammatical errors | <input type="checkbox"/> none                 |

#### Teaching pronunciation

How much time do you spend on teaching pronunciation and pronunciation activities including pronunciation error correction in a typical 90-minute lesson?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> none                | <input type="checkbox"/> 15 to 30 minutes     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than 5 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 30 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 to 15 minutes     | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know         |

Which of the following pronunciation areas do you focus on with your students?

- ☐ individual vowels
- ☐ individual consonants
- ☐ the *th* sounds
- ☐ sounds that do not appear in Czech
- ☐ word stress
- ☐ sentence stress
- ☐ weak and strong pronunciation of grammatical words
- ☐ intonation
- ☐ linking

Which of the following statements best describes your Pomat students?

- ☐ Most aspire to achieve native or native-like pronunciation.



- ☐ Most would like to be understood by native and native speakers, even if they have a Czech accent.
- ☐ Most want to keep their Czech accent when they speak English.

Please rate how much you agree with the following statements on a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

1 = strongly agree  
2 = agree  
3 = neutral

4 = disagree  
5 = strongly disagree

Only higher level students need to be taught pronunciation.	1	2	3	4	5
Students improve faster when teachers add explicit information on pronunciation to speaking activities.	1	2	3	4	5
Most students eventually learn pronunciation naturally by being exposed to the language.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel competent to teach all aspects of pronunciation.	1	2	3	4	5
I sometimes struggle with teaching pronunciation.	1	2	3	4	5
Only young students are able to improve their pronunciation.	1	2	3	4	5
Only native speakers should teach pronunciation.	1	2	3	4	5
It is sometimes difficult to understand my students because of their pronunciation.	1	2	3	4	5
There is usually no time to teach pronunciation as I have to focus on other aspects.	1	2	3	4	5
Having a strong foreign accent means the speaker's intelligibility suffers and that the listener has to try hard to understand them.	1	2	3	4	5
It is superfluous to teach students metalanguage used to describe pronunciation (e.g. <i>stress, vowel, linking, syllable</i> ).	1	2	3	4	5
Segmental (individual sounds) pronunciation errors cause more misunderstandings than suprasegmental (prosody) errors.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel comfortable teaching individual sounds.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel comfortable teaching prosody (e.g. rhythm, intonation, sentence stress).	1	2	3	4	5
The goal of pronunciation instruction is to make students more intelligible.	1	2	3	4	5
The goal of pronunciation instruction is to make students sound as close to native speakers as possible.	1	2	3	4	5

### **Pronunciation teacher training**

Have you ever received any training involving teaching pronunciation?

☐ yes                      ☐ no                      ☐ I am self-taught

If so, can you rate the quality of the training?

☐ very poor                      ☐ poor                      ☐ average                      ☐ good                      ☐ excellent

Can you briefly describe the scope of the training (e.g. a semester course focusing on segmentals)?

### **Finally, could you give some personal information related to TEFL?**

☐ Native speaker of English                      ☐ Native speaker of English

How long have you been teaching English as a second/foreign language?

☐ this is my first year of teaching                      ☐ 3 to 5 years  
☐ less than 3 years                      ☐ more than 5 years

Do you have a university degree related to teaching English as a second/foreign language?

☐ yes                      ☐ no

Do you have TEFL/TESOL/CELTA certification?

☐ yes                      ☐ no

What other languages do you speak? Please tick their level.

language:                      ☐ beginner                      ☐ intermediate                      ☐ advanced                      ☐ native

language:                      ☐ beginner                      ☐ intermediate                      ☐ advanced                      ☐ native

language:                      ☐ beginner                      ☐ intermediate                      ☐ advanced                      ☐ native

☐ none

*Thank you for completing this survey.*

## Appendix 2 Student Survey

*Dear Pomat student,*

*I would like to ask you to help me by answering the following questions about learning English. This survey is part of my MA thesis conducted at Charles University. The survey is anonymous and there are no right or wrong answers; I am interested in your opinion and experience. Please be honest when answering the questions, otherwise, the research cannot be successful.*

*I appreciate your cooperation.*

### English lessons

Which of the following areas are important for learning English?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> grammar          | <input type="checkbox"/> speaking skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> vocabulary       | <input type="checkbox"/> reading skills  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pronunciation    | <input type="checkbox"/> writing skills  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> listening skills |  |

On which of the following areas would you like to spend more time learning and practicing in the class?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> grammar          | <input type="checkbox"/> speaking skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> vocabulary       | <input type="checkbox"/> reading skills  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pronunciation    | <input type="checkbox"/> writing skills  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> listening skills |  |

Can you rate our quality of teaching regarding the following aspects on a scale from 1 (excellent) to 5 (very poor)?

Grammar	1	2	3	4	5
Vocabulary	1	2	3	4	5
Pronunciation	1	2	3	4	5
Listening skills	1	2	3	4	5
Speaking skills	1	2	3	4	5
Reading skills	1	2	3	4	5
Writing skills	1	2	3	4	5

Which of the following mistakes do your teachers correct during speaking activities?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> lexical errors     | <input type="checkbox"/> pronunciation errors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> grammatical errors | <input type="checkbox"/> none                 |

When was the last time your class learned or practiced pronunciation in the classroom?

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> last lesson | <input type="checkbox"/> more than a month ago |
| <input type="checkbox"/> this week   | <input type="checkbox"/> never                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> last week   | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't remember      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> last month  |  |

How much time do you spend on pronunciation learning and practicing including pronunciation error correction in a typical 90-minute lesson?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> none                | <input type="checkbox"/> 15 to 30 minutes     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> less than 5 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> more than 30 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 to 15 minutes     | <input type="checkbox"/> I don't know         |

What areas of pronunciation did you learn about or practice in the classroom?

- ☐ Pronunciation of individual vowels (for example *bad*)
- ☐ Pronunciation of individual consonants (for example *bathroom*)
- ☐ Pronunciation of new words
- ☐ Word stress (which syllable is stressed)
- ☐ Linking words together
- ☐ Weak and strong pronunciation of words such as *and* or *for*
- ☐ Sentence stress (which words are stressed and unstressed in a sentence)
- ☐ Our teachers correct our pronunciation mistakes
- ☐ We never focus on pronunciation
- ☐ I don't remember
- ☐ Other:

## **Pronunciation**

What are some of your common pronunciation problems?

- ☐ Pronunciation of individual vowels (for example *bad*)
- ☐ Pronunciation of individual consonants (for example *bathroom*)
- ☐ Pronunciation of new words
- ☐ I often don't know where the stress is in longer words
- ☐ I don't know which words are stressed in a sentence
- ☐ I don't sound natural
- ☐ I don't have any pronunciation problems
- ☐ I don't know what pronunciation problems I have
- ☐ Other pronunciation problems:

How do you know about your pronunciation problems?

- ☐ I don't know about them
- ☐ My teachers told me
- ☐ Somebody else told me
- ☐ I can hear it but I don't know how to correct it

How many of your teachers include pronunciation teaching and practice in their lessons?

- ☐ all five teachers
 ☐ two teachers  
☐ four teachers
 ☐ only one teacher  
☐ three teachers
 ☐ none of them

Please rate how much you agree with the following statements on a scale from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

1 = strongly agree  
 2 = agree  
 3 = neutral

4 = disagree  
 5 = strongly disagree

It is sometimes difficult for people to understand me when I speak English.	1 2 3 4 5
I am sometimes asked to repeat myself when I speak English.	1 2 3 4 5
I wish my teachers focused on pronunciation more.	1 2 3 4 5
I am sometimes discriminated against because of my foreign accent.	1 2 3 4 5
I wish I had better pronunciation when I speak English.	1 2 3 4 5
Other people will respect me if I sound more like a native speaker of English.	1 2 3 4 5
I only need to communicate with native speakers to improve my English.	1 2 3 4 5
Learning more pronunciation rules would help me improve my pronunciation.	1 2 3 4 5
I feel embarrassed when we practice pronunciation.	1 2 3 4 5
I only want to learn pronunciation with native speakers.	1 2 3 4 5
Native speakers can sometimes be better at teaching pronunciation than native speakers.	1 2 3 4 5
I wish my teachers corrected my pronunciation more than they do.	1 2 3 4 5

When you have problems communicating in English, is it probably because of a language problem or a pronunciation problem, or a combination of both?

- ☐ language problem
 ☐ pronunciation problem
 ☐ combination of both

What are your goals regarding pronunciation?

- ☐ Ideally, I would like to sound like a native speaker.
- ☐ I would like to be understood by everyone; other native speakers as well as native speakers.
- ☐ It is not important for me if I have a Czech accent or not.
- ☐ I want to keep my Czech accent when I speak English because I am Czech and I don't want to lose my Czech identity.

**Finally, could you give us some information about yourself?**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:     ☐ male            ☐ female

What other languages do you speak? What level?

language:            ☐ beginner            ☐ intermediate            ☐ advanced

☐ native language:            ☐ beginner            ☐ intermediate            ☐ advanced

☐ native

language:            ☐ beginner            ☐ intermediate            ☐ advanced

☐ native

☐ none

*Thank you for completing this survey.*